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LONGMAN'S MAGAZINE

JULY 1903.

*Christian Thal.*¹

BY M. E. FRANCIS.

BOOK II.

CHAPTER VIII.



JULIET lay long awake that night, her heart a prey to a tumult of emotions. Astonishment, wonder, a little fear, struggled with an ever-growing sense of happiness. How marvellous to be

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loved by Christian, to help him with his great work! Oh! she was not good enough; but then he thought so. Dear Christian, how could she ever prove her gratitude to him? Surely Daddy would not be angry if he knew—surely he would even be glad to think that she was associated with such a high vocation.

The hours wore on, golden for all their darkness to the outer world, and Juliet's heart sang a happy song which drowned the clatter of the busy street beneath her window. The town of Stättingen was unusually wakeful that night; the rattling of vehicles over the cobble-stones was to be heard even during the small hours, as well as the tramping of pedestrians, who laughed and chatted as they walked, and frequently whistled and sang as cheerfully as though treading a country lane at midday.

Only now and then did Juliet pay any heed to the medley of sounds; once when, after a momentary lull, a brisk footfall rang upwards from the pavement. That tread seemed to be young and elastic; it might have been Christian's. Again some passer-by whistled a fragment of a waltz tune, and she laughed to herself in the darkness as she recalled the boyish figure on the conductor's perch, his laughing face, his ridiculous imitation of the mannerisms of the well-known artist who led the orchestra at the Opera-House. Every now and then, when he had caught her eye, he had sent her an appealing glance, as though to say, 'I submit to this folly against my will,' and then presently the spirit of frolic had laid hold of him and he was laughing and jesting as before. Dear Christian! dear boy! How could she ever have said that she did not like boys? Surely it was the youth in him which cried out to her so strongly. She loved him *now*, just as he was, for himself, and not for the promise of the greatness to be.

The January dawn was filtering in through the shutters when at last she fell asleep, and it was with a violent start that she awoke, two or three hours later, to find Andrews standing by her bed with an irate and perturbed face.

'I am sure I don't know whatever is the matter, Miss Juliet,' she said. 'I was for letting you have your sleep out, for you was that sound it did seem cruel to disturb you. I've been in two or three times, and you never stirred, but the Countess thought it might be something important, and the lady, she kept askin' and askin'.'

An imperative tap caused her to break off, and the door, opening to an impatient hand, gave admittance to the spare form of Annola Istó. Juliet sat up, her eyes, heavy though they

were with slumber, dilating themselves in astonishment and alarm.

'Has anything happened?' she cried; 'is Christian ill?'

'Christian is quite well, thank you,' responded the other with forced calm, though her lips were pale. 'I merely wish to lose no time in speaking with you on a matter of importance. As your repose seemed likely to last indefinitely, and I had already waited some time, I thought I might venture to disturb you.'

'It's all right, Andrews,' said Juliet, turning to her maid, who still stood firmly planted by her couch, actuated apparently by some dim intuition that her mistress needed protection. 'People often do receive visits in their bedrooms in this country; though I can't help feeling that it is rather disrespectful,' she added, turning to her new-comer with a little nervous laugh.

The remark was received in silence, and Andrews, after placing a chair, reluctantly withdrew.

Annola did not seem to notice the maid's attention, but went forward, still in silence, till she reached the foot of Juliet's bed, where she took up her position, staring at the girl with sombre eyes. Never had Juliet appeared so much of a child as now, with her ruffled fair locks curling round her little flushed face, the wide lace frills of her nightgown falling away from her white neck, her figure almost ethereally slight beneath the clinging cambric folds. As she gazed, Annola's hand went involuntarily to her own throat, and encountering its leanness dropped again as though stung. Still she did not speak, and Juliet, unable any longer to brook those glowering eyes, stammered confusedly:

'Christian—I suppose Christian has told you?'

'He has told me nothing, but I guessed; and now I know.'

Once more that strange, terrible silence. Juliet glanced up at the gaunt, set face with a fear that was almost physical, and yet with an odd sense of compassion.

'You are angry,' she said, pleadingly, after a pause. 'Do not be angry. After all, he need not love you less because he loves me.'

Annola's thin hands clutched the bedpost savagely; she looked at the girl as though she would have slain her.

'Love!' she exclaimed in a strangled voice. 'It is not a question of love, nor even—what is much more important in my eyes—of broken faith, of betrayed confidence. It simply means the end of his career.'

Juliet felt herself turn pale, but she gathered up all her

courage and looked her enemy—for such she intuitively felt Annola to be—full in the face.

‘I do not see why that need be,’ she said gently. ‘It will not harm him to love me; on the contrary, it may help him.’

‘You fool!’ cried the other violently. ‘I can excuse your ignorance of the claims of Art, but that you should pretend to know Christian, and yet imagine that this silly affair, coming just at this crucial moment, will not certainly unsettle and most probably ruin him—bah! I have no patience with you!’

Juliet clasped and unclasped her hands nervously, but she did not answer.

‘Let me tell you,’ went on Annola vehemently, ‘Art is a jealous mistress, and will not be content with a divided heart. He who would woo her must devote his life to her—every thought, every feeling, every aspiration—above all at the outset. As for Christian, you, who have seen so much of him of late’—here those deep-set eyes of hers seemed positively to shoot forth flames—‘have you not yet found out what he is?—excitable, impressionable, weak! This *fancy* of his will pass, no doubt’—with a sneer—‘but coming *now*, at a moment when it is essential that he should devote his whole soul, his entire energies to his work, it will most certainly do him irreparable injury. He loves you, or thinks he loves you,’ she went on after a momentary pause, ‘and you no doubt imagine that you love him, and yet you would do him this injury.’

Juliet’s heart was sinking lower and lower. She threw out her hands as though to ward off a blow.

‘Injure him!’ she cried. ‘I! Oh no, no!’

Annola stamped impatiently.

‘Oh, no, no!’ she echoed sardonically; ‘and yet you do it. That is not love. I love him as he should be loved. I can make sacrifices for him—I can efface myself for him. I toil unwearyingly for his sake. I submit to his coldness and his ingratitude, and work for him still. I have always pushed him on. And *you*—what would you do? You would clasp those weak, foolish arms of yours about him and drag him down; you would hang upon him—a clog, so that he must become as impotent as yourself. I tell you, if you really loved him you would set him free.’

Juliet gazed at her dizzily. Was this fierce cruel woman speaking the truth? Was this wonderful new sweet dream indeed so selfish and hurtful? Like a flash her memory went back to that

little episode of the previous evening—Christian turning round on the piano-stool and dropping his inert hands: 'I cannot play to-night.' He could not play—because of her.

Annola, quick to read her face, observed that she had made an impression, and continued in a gentler tone:

'Your own common-sense must prove to you that I am right. You must see for yourself that Christian has become fitful and idle. He does not study regularly; he displeases his master. He is irritable, unsettled—never to be depended on from one moment to another. Is this the spirit in which a young artist should prepare himself for his life's work? Every month—what do I say?—every *day* is now of importance. He ought to devote himself heart and soul to his studies, now more than ever; yet he only pursues them in a desultory fashion. He is dreamy, listless—ach—' she struck her forehead. 'I tell you if this goes on his whole future will be wrecked.'

'I said we were too young,' said Juliet, half to herself; her lip trembled and there were tears in her voice.

But a short time ago she had smiled to herself over the thought of this divine youth, but now each one of Annola's words fell upon her heart like lead. She had been so proud to think that she was to help him, to encourage him, to be the promoter of his highest and best. Not—what was it the woman said?—to be a clog on him, to drag him down.

'What do you want me to do?' she said, almost in a whisper.

Annola leaned forward, her face livid in its eagerness.

'I want you to give him up,' she said. 'Give him up now, at once, that no further precious time may be lost.'

'But—but he will not give me up,' cried Juliet. Her voice sounded harsh and strange in her own ears, her head was in a whirl; she felt as though a blinding, choking darkness were closing in upon her, but made one last desperate effort towards the light. Even if she were to sacrifice herself Christian would not permit it.

'If you are in earnest he will have to give you up. Now, listen to me; I am speaking to you as if you were not the child that you are, but a woman. I am willing to believe'—her voice vibrated with her earnestness—'that you *do* love Christian, and I appeal to you because of your love to save him from himself. Leave him, go away from him; put it out of his power to divide his allegiance. When you are gone—when he is unable either to see or to write to you, for he must be ignorant of your address—he

will become sane again; his art will once more be all in all to him.'

'Do you mean that I must never see him again?' said Juliet with a gasp.

'You—you——' broke out Annola, and paused, choking. A wave of blind unreasoning fury had suddenly swept over her. How dared she—the little creature, the foolish baby—look at her with that stricken face? What could she know of the anguish of baffled love? But after a moment she forced back the scathing retort that had risen to her lips and shrugged her shoulders; after all, better humour the child. 'Never—that is a big word. In future, perhaps, when he stands firm, when his success is assured——'

'No,' said Juliet hopelessly. 'It is the end. If I part from him now so unkindly, if I break off all communication with him, it must be the end. Will you please go away now?' she added, dropping back on her pillows. 'I want to be alone—I must think.'

'I do not leave you until you have given me your word. You must choose. On the one hand there is your own selfish gratification, the satisfaction of Christian's passing whim—and the blighting of his life. On the other, self sacrifice, a little pain—perhaps even great pain'—watching the girl narrowly—'and the consciousness that you have saved him from destruction.'

'I will do it,' said Juliet in a low, exhausted voice; then, as Annola bent over her and would have taken her hand, she cried with a vehemence of which the other had not thought her capable: 'Do not touch me! Don't come near me! I pray I may never see your face again!'

CHAPTER IX.



'I CANNOT understand it,' said Professor Lennox. 'The affair seems to me to grow more and more complicated. Countess de Galphi's telegram throws no light at all upon the matter—in fact, I can't make out what she means. If it were not for this abominable gout I should start at once for Stättingen.'

As he spoke he glanced ruefully at the swathed limb stretched out stiffly before him, and groaned, partly with pain and partly because of his perturbation of mind.

'Let me see the telegrams,' said Horace Bulkeley.

'There they are—both of them. That is Juliet's on the little table.'

Bulkeley unfolded the paper and read slowly: '*I beg of you let me come to you at once. Most urgent.* Yes, she certainly seems in earnest; and now the Countess's—in answer to yours I suppose?'

'Yes, in answer to mine, asking if Juliet were ill, and requiring an explanation.'

'*Juliet quite well,*' read Horace. '*Pay no attention. Only a label.* Surely there must be a mistake—it cannot be "label."'

'I have been racking my brains over that word,' said the

Professor fretfully. 'It certainly is *label*, but it makes no sense.'

'I will go down to the post-office and have the wire repeated,' said Horace soothingly. 'They are a little uncertain about their English, you know; there must be a mistake. Meanwhile do not,' he added hesitatingly, 'do not distress yourself too much; after all, we know Miss Lennox is well, and that is the main point.'

'I have never known her behave in such a way,' said Mr. Lennox, rolling his head restlessly on his cushions. 'It cannot be merely a sudden aversion to Stättingen; yet certainly she did seem to take an unaccountable dislike to this place. What is to be done? I cannot encourage these caprices, and yet—you see the child says *most urgent*.'

'I will go to the post-office,' said Horace, taking up his hat. 'Try not to worry till I return.'

But it is needless to say the Professor almost fretted himself into a fever during the hour and a half which elapsed before his friend came back, and conjured up every conceivable misfortune which might be likely to account for Juliet's unexpected appeal.

'The word is *lubie*,' said Horace, pausing beside the couch and smiling in spite of himself. 'Is it not characteristic of Countess de Galphi? If we had borne her peculiarities in mind we might have remembered that it would be quite impossible to her to keep to her native tongue even in a telegram.' He grew grave again, however, as he continued: 'I met a telegraph boy on the steps just as I came back; he got here on his bicycle more quickly than I could. Perhaps this will throw a little light upon the matter.'

The Professor took the neatly fastened paper quickly from his hand. '*Consent, I implore of you. I would not ask without good reason.* I think I must give in, Bulkeley; but how on earth is it to be managed? I hardly like to let her come so far with no better escort than Andrews. It is not a very direct journey, and though Andrews is a good travelling maid, still, of course, she cannot speak the language fluently. And Juliet is so young—I don't think it would do for her to travel all that way, practically unprotected.'

'Would you allow me to go and fetch her?' said Bulkeley, answering the appeal in his eyes. 'I should be delighted. I would set off at once, so as to reach Stättingen to-morrow morning.'

'My dear fellow, if you will do this for me,' said Mr. Lennox, grasping his hand; 'it will be a weight off my mind. It will be a proof of friendship which I shall not easily forget. Let us wire to the child at once; let us put her out of pain. After all, it will be nice to see her little face again—eh, Bulkeley?'

Horace assented cordially, and withdrew to despatch the telegram and make his preparations for departure. He had proffered his services somewhat hesitatingly, being aware that in so doing he was acting in a somewhat unconventional manner; but the Professor was accustomed to disregard the trammels of social observances when it seemed good to him, and, moreover, could never bring himself to realise that Juliet was no longer a child.

After many hours of incessant travelling Horace arrived at Stättingen, and was received by the Countess with a mixture of relief and indignation. Juliet was not in the room.

'I can't think what has come to the girl. She was as merry as a cricket until two days ago. As I said to my husband: "*La petite est gaie comme une cigale*," and now she has taken to shutting herself up, and pining, and moping, and refusing to say anything but that she must return to her father at once. It is the greatest Dummheit. She was getting on so nicely with her German, and the life here was so educating for her. As I said, she was beginning to get rid of a little of the cotton-wool. But there is no use in arguing with her. She wants to get back to her bandbox.'

'It certainly seems extraordinary,' said Horace, seeing that something was expected of him, 'but, after all, outsiders cannot always judge. Miss Lennox has probably some private reason which is a good one.'

'Private fiddlesticks!' retorted the old lady. 'A child of that age! *N'est-ce pas, Ignace, ce serait impossible pour une enfant comme Juliet d'avoir des raisons privées? Elle n'est pas capable d'avoir des raisons privées—comme je dis, elle a été gaie comme rien tout ce temps.*'

'It is true,' responded the Count slowly. 'Miss Juliet till this moment appeared to amuse herself well. She seemed to like the young society here. It is perhaps a—a little affair of the heart which has'—he paused—'which has—how would one say?—échoué—chewed.'

'Une affaire de cœur? Nonsense, bêtise, mon ami.'

The Count bowed and collapsed.

'I mean,' continued Madame de Galphi, turning to Horace, 'if it was a love affair she wouldn't be in such a hurry to get away from the young man, would she?'

'Then there is a young man?' said Horace.

'There are two if it comes to that, though I think Christian Thal is the more favoured. You remember young Thal?—a good-looking boy and a wonderful player, but conceited. He and Juliet apparently parted on the most friendly terms the very night before she took this fancy into her head. Well, he has been here a dozen times since; he has been simply clamouring for her, but she won't see him or the other one either. She won't come downstairs for fear of meeting them. She is altogether impossible. Fond as I am of her, I am positively glad to have her taken off my hands. I am a little afraid of—of that, you know'—here she tapped her forehead meaningly; 'brain, you understand—brain!'

'I think you need have no fears on that score,' returned Bulkeley, with an indignation which he made no attempt to conceal.

'Don't be too sure,' retorted the old lady with her usual triumphant pessimism. 'I shouldn't be a *bit* surprised at something of the kind in her father's daughter—genius and madness—you know? Too much brain on the one side, and perhaps too little on the other. And, anyhow, Mr. Lennox is very odd himself.'

Horace was in no mood to enter upon an argument, and the matter was suffered to drop. But he was even more disquieted than before; the Count's suggestion had confirmed his own private hypothesis. He remembered young Thal very well, and had formed his own opinion as to the cause of Juliet's depression after his departure from Schönwald.

The girl's appearance when, early on the following morning, she met him in the passage did not tend to reassure him. How pale the little face, what dark circles round the eyes! She looked years older than when he had parted from her, and yet there was a pathetic appealing helplessness about her that more than ever suggested the child.

'It was very good of you to come,' she said hurriedly; 'you have always been good to me. I wonder if—if you would do one more thing for me.'

'What is it?' he asked, in a voice which gave the required promise.

'I want you to come with me right up to the top of the house, and to give a message.'

'Are you there, Juliet?' called the Countess from the adjoining room. 'I am pouring out your coffee.'

'In one moment,' answered Juliet. She ran noiselessly up the stairs, looking over her shoulder every now and then to see if Bulkeley was following; and, indeed, he kept close behind her. When they reached the topmost landing she paused, breathless. 'Do you see that door?' she whispered, pointing with her finger. 'I want you to knock at it, and to tell M. Michotte, who lives there, to come to me for a moment.'

Horace glanced at her keenly. Was it, after all, not Thal, but this other.

'I only want to see him for a moment,' she said with tremulous eagerness. 'I shall be downstairs almost as soon as you are.'

She turned so as to face the stairs, while Horace hastened along the passage, and tapped loudly at the door which she had designated.

'Herein!' cried a sleepy voice, and Horace, obeying the summons, found himself speedily in an icy garret chamber, where a swarthy shaggy-haired youth sat up in bed, blinking with astonishment.

Horace gave his message hastily in French, according to the stammered request of his host, after he had made a futile attempt to explain himself in German, and was immediately rewarded by the thud of Bobo's bare feet upon the floor.

'Be quick over your toilet,' he advised, somewhat grimly; 'there is not much time to lose. Miss Lennox and I are leaving by the 6.30 train.'

'Leaving! Just Heaven!' ejaculated Bobo, sinking on the side of his bed and gazing at him with a dropping jaw.

'Yes, leaving. Come, make haste, Monsieur!—Miss Lennox cannot wait.'

'Just Heaven!' Bobo exclaimed again, making a wild plunge towards his garments, which lay in a disordered heap on a neighbouring chair. 'What a misfortune! Tell her, I pray you, that I will be with her in a moment. Leaving, sapristi!'

'It cannot be he,' thought Bulkeley as he closed the door. 'Yet he is certainly very much overcome; and why should she wish to see him? Well, it is no affair of mine.'

'He is coming,' he announced as Juliet turned anxiously towards him, and passing her he ran swiftly down the stairs.

Almost immediately Bobo came hastening from his room, his face wilder than ever under his dishevelled hair.

'You are going!' he ejaculated as he reached her. 'Oh, Juliet, what does this mean?'

'I cannot tell you,' she said, trying to steady her voice, and looking at him with eyes heavy with unshed tears. He took both her hands and wrung them silently; there were tears in his own eyes, and his honest ugly face was working.

'It is Christian who will be in despair,' he blurted out after a moment. 'Poor fellow! he is already almost out of his mind because you will not see him. Why is it, Juliet? Has he offended you? But at least you will see him to say good-bye.'

'I cannot,' said Juliet. 'Oh, Bobo, I can't explain—don't ask me. I want you to give him a message from me. Tell him that—— No, tell him nothing, but give him this—give it to him after I am gone.' She held out to him a folded paper, which in his agitation he clutched at. 'You must hold it carefully—you must not crush it; he will know what it means.'

'And is that all?' stammered Bobo.

'That is all. He will know. Good-bye, Bobo. Be kind to him.'

She pressed his hands, and then withdrew her own, and hurried downstairs blindly.

She had already sped some distance on her way when Bobo fulfilled her last behest. He found Christian pale and heavy-eyed after a sleepless night, and told his tale haltingly and with many qualms, dreading the storm which, as he thought, must infallibly burst forth when his friend learnt of Juliet's departure.

The silence with which the announcement was received, however, alarmed him more than an outbreak of fury or despair.

'She is gone,' said Christian in a lifeless voice—'gone without even saying farewell. You knew she was going, and you did not call me.'

'It was her wish,' faltered Bobo. 'I could not have gone against her. She looked—as if she could bear no more. But she thought of you, Christian; she sent you a note.'

'A note!' echoed Christian from between his set teeth. 'How much do you think that comforts me when I may not

even see her face or touch her hand? Oh, if you had not come that night! There'—breaking off suddenly—'give it to me.'

He had taken the paper quickly from the other's hand, but opened it reverently, with shaking fingers.

'She said you would know what it meant,' said Bobo, as his friend turned the paper round and round.

It contained no words—only a dried flower. Christian's face lit up amid all its woe.

'Yes, I know what it means,' he said, and pressed the little flower to his lips.

It was an Edelweiss.

BOOK III.

CHAPTER I.



SOME five years later a house party was assembled at a certain beautiful old Kentish manor-house for Eastertide; Sir Mark and Lady Shipley having offered a few of their friends a refuge from the intolerable desolation of town during the holidays. It was a somewhat mixed gathering: a Cabinet Minister, a personage from the War Office, a couple of foreign attachés, an American actress, a society novelist; two pretty women whom everybody knew, and who were in fact related to the hostess; and two other pretty women whom not many people knew, but of whom it was prophesied that they would soon come to the front; a few smart young men of no particular avocation; and, lastly, Juliet Lennox—Juliet, looking not so very much older than when she had steamed away from Stättingen in the company of Horace Bulkeley, though

she had put up her hair and grown a little taller. One glance would have sufficed to indicate that her intelligence, at least, had developed to a remarkable degree; yet any friend of the child Juliet would have missed something in the face of the Juliet of to-day. It was, as ever, sweet and bright, but the confident, expectant expression which had characterised it of old was now absent.

'You never seem to look forward to anything,' her hostess and cousin had said to her that very evening; 'you, who always used to be building castles in the air. You've not lost your power of enjoyment, I hope?'

'Not at all,' said Juliet with a laugh. 'I take things as they come, and if they are good things I enjoy them very much.'

'You live altogether in the present, in fact,' returned the other; 'you don't look forward to the future, and you don't look back upon the past—at least I suppose you don't; but one never can tell with you; you are such a reserved little creature.'

Juliet smiled, but said nothing. She and her father had only just returned to England after an absence of more than two years, and were now settled in London, where they intended to pass the season, not so much on the girl's account as because Mr. Lennox, who was hard at work on a new book, wished to be within reach of the British Museum.

Dinner was over on the Monday evening, and the womenfolk were gathered round the library fire, taking note of each other's dresses and talking in a somewhat desultory fashion.

Lady Shipley, who had been much bored by her companion at dinner, and who at all times discharged the duties of hostess in a somewhat vague and perfunctory manner, was leaning back in an armchair, extending one little embroidered shoe to the blaze and closing her eyes; the actress had betaken herself to one of the Louis Quinze mirrors which decorated the room, and, producing a powder-puff from a little silver box, was diligently powdering her nose, which, as she confided to the novelist on leaving the dining-room, was, she felt, more lustrous than was becoming. The pretty women split up into couples, the two who were as yet a little uncertain of their position avoiding each other by mutual consent.

'Has anybody seen to-day's paper?' said Mrs. Pontefract, one of Lady Shipley's cousins, stifling a yawn.

'My dear!' said Lady Mary Sherborne, 'the idea of looking at a Bank Holiday paper!—as if it ever had anything in it except the

weather and Good Friday festivities for the people, and all that sort of thing.'

'Isn't there anything about the Drawing Room?' said Mrs. Pontefract, 'or about the Cranley divorce? I used to know Arthur Pembroke rather well, poor fellow! I don't believe it's his fault.'

'There couldn't be anything going on about it now,' said Lady Shipley, sleepily, from her armchair. 'The courts don't sit, or whatever they call it.'

'Oh! oh! oh!' cried Mrs. Pontefract with sparkling eyes, 'I have found something worth knowing, though. Christian Thal is playing at Canterbury to-morrow.'

Juliet, who had been describing sundry of her travels to the novelist, lost the thread of her discourse, and after an ineffectual attempt to recover herself turned round in her chair.

'A new pianist, I suppose,' she said as quietly as she could.

Lady Mary had jumped up and crossed the room to her cousin's side, while Lady Shipley opened her eyes and became animated all at once.

'That divine creature!' she cried. 'Are you sure, Theresa?'

'Perfectly,' returned the other. 'Here it is: "Mr. Christian Thal, who is making a tour in the provinces previous to his recital in London, will play at Canterbury to-morrow; thence the talented artist proceeds to Dover; and he will also, we understand——"'

'Just my fate,' exclaimed Lady Shipley. 'To-morrow! And we are booked for those abominable races.'

'Oh, but *must* we go,' cried Mrs. Pontefract, 'when that wondrous playing is to be heard only sixteen miles away?'

Lady Mary looked a little pensive, and presently remarked that though she was passionately fond of music, racing was very jolly too. 'Particularly a point-to-point, when you know everybody that's ridin',' she added.

'There's no question about which we *must* do,' said Lady Shipley resignedly. 'Mark would never hear of anything but the races; that's the worst of these hunting men, they are so narrow-minded. He wants to sell a horse or two, besides.'

'Have you heard Christian Thal, Ethel? Is he very good?' inquired Juliet, turning to her and speaking in rather a wavering voice.

There was a general outcry. 'Good! My dear child, he's superb! Do you mean to say you have never heard of him?'

'Is that his first visit to England?' inquired Juliet. 'You

see, having been away for so long I know very little of what's going on. We have spent about eighteen months in Japan—in remote parts, you know. My father would not have any English papers sent to us—he said it spoilt the charm and the illusion; so that I've often wondered how the world was wagging.'

There was a general murmur of commiseration.

'I call that rather selfish,' said Lady Mary. 'Why, all sorts of things might have happened and you mightn't know. Your dearest friend might be dead and buried—or married,' she added naïvely. 'One is nearly as bad as the other.'

'We haven't got many friends,' said Juliet. 'I didn't really mind.'

'You horrid little thing!' said Lady Mary; 'you are getting nearly as unsociable as your father.'

'Juliet is very nice,' said Lady Shipley languidly; 'I like her all the better for not being like everybody else—it's quite refreshing.'

'They give his programme in the *Times*,' cried Mrs. Pontefract at this juncture. 'He is playing the "Waldstein"—Heavens! And two of the most lovely Nocturnes that Chopin ever wrote.'

'You have not answered my question,' said Juliet gently. 'Is this his first visit to England?'

'Here is this poor little Chin-chin asking for information,' said Lady Mary. 'No; by the way, you were in Japan, weren't you? Yum-Yum would be more appropriate. You are dreadfully behind the age, Yum-Yum, but we'll take pity on you. Christian Thal came to England a year ago, and took the world by storm; he had already been very well received on the Continent; and he has since been to America, so that, except in Japan, I suppose, he has been heard of all over the world. I don't pretend to admire his playing myself so much as Voslau's. There is power if you like!'

'Yes,' interrupted Mrs. Pontefract hastily, 'sledge-hammer power. They call him the "Harmonious Blacksmith," don't they? And then he's such an ugly fellow. Now Thal is beautiful—no other word describes him.'

Here Mrs. Leslie, one of the smart nobodies, who had been sedulously making up to Lady Mary during the evening, took up the cudgels in defence of her *protégé*.

'But surely the immense nervous energy, don't you know, in Voslau's face atones for any irregularity of feature. Ah, when

he lifts those great glowing eyes of his, and brings down his hands on the piano in a mighty chord—*bang*—it is magnificent.’

‘I can’t bear him,’ said Lady Shipley faintly.

‘Ah, you are like me,’ put in Mrs. Malmesbury Smith, Mrs. Leslie’s rival. ‘What I seek first of all in music is delicacy—that ethereal charm, you know, such as Ghyschy has with the violin. One hears his very soul as it were escaping from his finger-tips. Now, *he* has a lovely face if you like. Once last year I gave him a tribute of flowers; I had been so carried away when I heard him before, don’t you know, and so I ordered a great stand of crimson roses between five and six feet high. I chose crimson on purpose to suit his complexion—that exquisite dark, clear colouring. And to my delight he placed it just behind him. It threw him out so you can’t think; and there was a kind of poetical charm in seeing his figure outlined against the background of flowers.’

‘I always think musicians are very much bored by these floral offerings,’ said Lady Mary, who had not found herself able to foregather, as she expressed it, with Mrs. Malmesbury Smith, and who considered her distinctly over-dressed. ‘I remember seeing a man once—I can’t remember who it was now, but he was an immense celebrity. Some admirer had presented him with a wreath of laurel as big as a cart-wheel, with long green silk streamers, and he just trundled it off the stage, or whatever you call it, by the extreme end of one of them. He looked so cross.’

‘What a programme! oh, what a programme!’ exclaimed Mrs. Pontefract, looking up from the paper. ‘Ethel, I can’t go to those races—positively I can’t. I couldn’t be such a Goth when Thal is playing only a few miles away. I must go and hear him whatever everybody else does.’

‘Well, you can’t walk sixteen miles, you know,’ returned her cousin tranquilly, ‘and you can’t have any horses. I’m very sorry, my dear, but we shall want them all, I’m afraid.’

‘Isn’t there a carrier’s cart, or a baker’s van, or something or other in the village?’ inquired Mrs. Pontefract eagerly. ‘If I have to charter a donkey-cart I’ll go.’

‘Why not the Vicarage pill-box?’ put in Lady Mary, somewhat sarcastically. ‘I am sure Mrs. Perkins would lend it to you. Her horse is only seventeen, and you would have to walk up all the hills, but you could get to Canterbury if you started early enough.’

'Do you mean that covered wagonette thing?' said Mrs. Pontefract, brightening up. 'That's an idea! As you say, I *could* get there—in time. Who will come with me? You, Juliet? I know you are passionately fond of music, and I'm sure you don't care about races.'

'How can I be so rude as to say I don't?' stammered Juliet.

'As if any of us cared about races—except, perhaps, Mary,' said Lady Shipley plaintively. 'We are only going from a sense of duty; people expect it, and Mark would be furious if we didn't. But you're not bound to come, Juliet; I'm sure I shouldn't if I were you.'

Mrs. Pontefract clapped her hands and made a little spring expressive of delight.

'You'll come, you'll come! I'll share my pill-box with you, and you'll be more ravished than you ever were in your life. You cannot even conceive what he is like.'

'Don't make me more envious than I am already,' said Lady Shipley. 'I never have any luck; I missed his last recital on account of "flu." But I have heard him once, and he transported me to another world. I felt so happy and so good. Mark said I was a perfect angel for nearly a fortnight afterwards. He said he only wished I could hear him oftener.'

'So you are coming,' said Mrs. Pontefract, addressing Juliet in a satisfied tone. 'That's very sweet of you. As a reward I'll play to you by-and-by when the men come in.'

Lady Mary made a grimace at Lady Shipley unseen by their mutual cousin.

'I thought we were going to play games,' she murmured. 'I know a ripping new one—Kitchen Spoons. Have you ever played Kitchen Spoons?'

Lady Shipley shook her head without enthusiasm.

'Oh, it's screamingly funny,' cried the other. 'Somebody's blindfolded, you know, and everybody changes places, and he goes up to somebody and taps him all over with two kitchen spoons. Then he has to guess. It's ripping.'

'I don't think I should like it,' said her cousin languidly; 'but I wish Theresa wouldn't play. We've been talking of Christian Thal, and I've got his music in my head, and she'll take away the flavour of it.'

'She's determined to play,' returned Lady Mary, somewhat acidly; 'better set her to work as soon as possible and get it over.'

Mrs. Pontefract was considered, and, indeed, not without grounds, an exceptionally good amateur, and Juliet remembered having listened to her of old with considerable pleasure. She was glad enough on the present occasion when her cousin sat down at the piano. The music might tranquillise her thoughts, and would at least relieve her of the necessity of further conversation. Though Mrs. Pontefract took it for granted that she would accompany her on the morrow, she had not as yet agreed to do so, and was, in truth, sorely exercised in her mind on the subject. An immense longing to see Christian again, to hear him, to witness his triumphs, battled with a shrinking reluctance to make one of the crowd, to hearken to its meaningless admiration, to stand afar off while he received the ovation of the indifferent. How could she bear it?—she, Juliet, who had been enthroned in his heart of hearts, to whom he had once laid bare every secret aspiration of his soul? She welcomed, therefore, the little breathing-space; yet when Mrs. Pontefract played the opening bars of Chopin's Ballade in A flat she was in imminent danger of breaking down. The performance was very creditable, evincing genuine feeling and good execution. Mrs. Pontefract possessed what the initiated among her friends called 'a wonderful natural finger,' and if her bass was occasionally a little erratic, she was careful to keep the pedal down, so that hardly anybody noticed her slips.

Lady Mary, however, was one of the exceptions, and was determined her dear friend and cousin should be made aware of the fact.

'Such a jolly thing,' she remarked; 'isn't it? That sort of hoppy part in the middle always reminds me of a man driving along a lame donkey. By the way, somebody told me a good story the other day. You'll like it, Theresa—it's a musical one. It's about Rubinstein. He often played wrong notes, you know. Isn't it a comfort to think these big men play wrong notes just like anybody else? Well, he was giving a concert somewhere or other, and he had to finish up with an awfully difficult piece, ending with a run all the way up; and he missed the very last note of all. Wasn't it hard luck? Well, he was simply furious, and when he was recalled—people nearly standing on their heads with enthusiasm, don't you know—he simply wouldn't go back. They clapped, and shouted, and shrieked, and whistled, but he wouldn't. At last, however, somebody fairly pushed him on the platform, and then what do you think he did? He just marched up to the piano,

thumped the note that he had missed, bowed to the audience, and went away. The audience was so delighted it nearly devoured him.'

'By Jove!' exclaimed Sir Mark, much impressed; 'good chap that; it's like taking a horse back to a hurdle he's refused.'

'Awfully jolly story,' said a young man who had dropped down beside Lady Mary on the sofa.

'Yes, I can't imagine why I thought of it now,' returned she innocently. 'Isn't it rather nice, Theresa?'

'Splendid,' rejoined her cousin, moving away from the piano with a heightened colour.

'Now, what shall we play?' cried Lady Mary with animation. 'It's a bore that Ethel doesn't like Kitchen Spoons. Let's play Clumps, and you and I will go out. I'm reservin' another clippin' game for later on—it has to be played when the bedroom candles are lighted. Do you know The Ghost? Don't tell them if you do. 'Twill be such fun to send Lord — sprawling on his back.'

The rest of the evening was spent in the intellectual manner common to gatherings of the kind.

Juliet joined with the rest in asking strings of questions, and blowing a feather into the air, and playing Animal Grab. When Lady Mary, impersonating a spectre, had by a series of hollow-voiced instructions persuaded the assembled guests to stand side by side, waving their hands aimlessly and balancing themselves insecurely on one leg, she formed one of the band; and when the lively young woman, taking advantage of their defenceless attitude, had by means of an adroit push to the Cabinet Minister sent the whole party reeling to the floor, she had tumbled down with the rest, and picked herself up somewhat bruised and shaken, but feigning, like everybody else, to be much entertained by the amusing surprise.

But how unreal it all seemed! How unmeaning the glitter and clatter of Vanity Fair: the small talk, the petty jealousies, the rivalries! How senseless, above all, the prattle about music and musical matters! Not thus had the real devotees of the sacred art sought to plumb its depths and scale its heights in that far-away time when she had found herself in their midst. A gay, irresponsible time enough to all appearance, but moulding how many great ambitions and high hopes!

How strange that it should be no echo from the artistic world, but the foolish, good-natured voice of Society, that had broken in

for the first time upon the long silence which had enshrouded her soul's secret!

It seemed like desecration to her that the tremendous news was to be thus announced: Christian had fulfilled his destiny; Christian, armed and equipped at all points for the battle, had thrown down his gauntlet to the world.

(To be continued.)

A Night in the Open at Twenty-two Thousand Feet:

BEING AN ACCOUNT OF AN ASCENT OF ACONCAGUA.

PART II.

THAT night was like the last, and like the one to come—agonising, filthy, and miserable beyond expression. At a very early hour on December 13 Anacleto decided that the wind had dropped sufficiently to allow us to march to the 19,000-foot camp, and about six o'clock we started—myself, Anacleto, Manuel, and José. The last three each carried a load, and I fancied at the time that Manuel, being the youngest of the party, had been given the lion's share of the baggage.

We took only the two small Whympier tents, sleeping-bags, blankets, Primus stove, and a little food. Snow was to supply us with water. Anacleto was now attired in a duplicate set of my clothes—Jaeger combinations about two feet too long for him, two azure shirts, three pairs of Shetland stockings, and Zurbriggen's boots, which that famous man had presented to Dr. Cotton on his return from the first conquest of Aconcagua.

Our way led at first over slushy snow, between the serried *nieves penitentes*, almost due north; and then we turned up the great slope in a south-easterly direction. As far as eye could reach stretched a steep face of snow, and I saw that our ascent would be made under conditions very different from those prevailing at the dates of the Zurbriggen, Vines, and Conway ascents. Zurbriggen went to the top without putting his feet on snow, and Vines and Conway encountered far less snow than scree. As it turned out I trod on hardly anything but snow, both soft and hard, until I reached the rocky gully on the summit-ridge, and thus escaped almost entirely the continual backsliding on volcanic débris which so tired and retarded the previous expeditions.

It was about six when we started, and for hour after hour we

went plodding on over the interminable white waste. Sometimes we came to places where steps had to be cut, and here Anacleto took the lead and hewed away with his ice-axe. Sir Martin Conway says in his book (p. 93) that there is no step on the whole mountain which a child could not take. I beg leave to doubt whether the child in the street would (and 'could' in these cases hangs upon 'would') climb step by step as the leader halts to hack out a fresh foothold up a snow face on which a fall would obviously mean extinction. The President of the Alpine Club must not found generalisations on the abnormal capacity of his own offspring to walk unaided on the spikes of the area railings and chase the cat over the window-cornices of the fifth storey.

The jagged rocks of our encampment by this time stood out well in view, and as the day wore on the weight of their burdens told on the men, and I managed to get a good lead, and sat down at last to rest on some boulders. Manuel and José were now far behind Anacleto; and presently I heard a shout, and then saw Anacleto put down his load and go down the mountain to his comrades. Manuel the dandy, Manuel the delight of the damsels of Inca, had given out, and lay panting in the snow. So Anacleto shouldered his load in his stead—which he evidently found a good deal heavier than his own—and he and José struggled up to where I sat, and began a long division and readjustment of the three loads, while Manuel got up and slunk down to illimitable beef and sleep.

There was nothing really the matter with him. No doubt he felt somewhat *punafied*; and perhaps the thought of all that beef wasting below turned the scale. He was not of heroic build, wasn't Manuel. We others toiled on, often having to stop and lean like logs on our ice-axes, until at last, about four o'clock, we got to the bare flattish patch behind the jagged rocks whence Anacleto said Sir Martin Conway had made his way to the summit.

High above us, yet not seeming to be very far away, stood out the red palisades of rock that appeared to be the summit of Aconagua; behind us, to the west, we looked over Torlosa to the Pacific. I might have stayed out and watched what may have been, for aught I know, the most splendid sunset ever seen, but I didn't. Directly a tent was pitched I crawled into it, and then into my bag; and the two men left the other tent unpitched and crawled in after me, remarking that now Manuel was gone there was plenty of room for everybody in one. We were all tired and cold and speechlessly miserable, and we were very

crowded. As usual, the wind blew out the flame of the lamp time after time, and filled our noses and mouths with the oily stench; but we got some hot cocoa at last. Soon it dawned on my dulled brain that there was something seriously amiss with Anacleto: his eyes were bloodshot and watery, and he groaned incessantly. Although he had worn his goggles all day, he was evidently snow-blind: he seized my hand and thrust it into his streaming eyes, crying out like a child that he was done for, and could go no farther.

'My eyes! Oh, my eyes!' he kept muttering, and then he would groan heart-rendingly. I felt so acutely wretched that this misfortune hardly affected me. At 19,000 feet existence itself seems the utmost limit of human endurance, and regrets and hopes cower as at the near approach of death. José was the only one of the three who slept much that night; Anacleto and I punctuated the long minutes with groans. The old pains in the head were torturing me; my limbs were sound and well, and I had no symptoms of the indigestion and nausea which had broken down several members of the previous expeditions. At one in the morning I gave up the farce of trying to sleep, and set about making more cocoa, which Anacleto and I drank to the music of José's snores. I also ate half-a-dozen tiny slabs of chocolate, as provided by the Army and Navy Stores, and when I had finished I felt as though I should not want any more food for a fortnight. As it happened, that cocoa and chocolate, with six meat lozenges, was the only food I ate for the next forty hours. Next I woke up José and asked him, in my two words of Spanish, if he would go with me to '*el pico*'¹ and earn an extra fifty dollars. He growled out '*Si*'² and went fast asleep again. At half-past three I, with great difficulty, roused him again, and got him, not without grumbling, to put on the layer upon layer of horsehide which served him as boots. While he was dressing I went outside and had a look at the weather. It was a grand morning, clear and cloudless, and the sun was already rosy on the windless peaks. I packed a rucksack with plenty of food for both of us, including a bottle of port and egg-flip specially reserved for the return journey; for though alcohol is a bad thing to climb on, it is an excellent thing to toboggan down on when you have reached the summit of your ambition and never want to see it again.

It was a little after four in the morning of December 14 when we set out; and I felt a little compunction in leaving poor

¹ 'The peak.'

² 'Yes.'

Anacleto alone for twelve or fourteen hours, but what else could I do? To wait at 19,000 feet for a better opportunity is a physical impossibility; inaction at those heights is a creeping death. Directly we had emerged from the tent José asked me pointedly if I had got *el vino*,¹ and felt in the rucksack for the bottle to make certain. This was a bad sign; but I was carrying my large water-bottle myself, and I didn't care very much who got to the bottom of the port so long as I got to the top of the mountain. To our right loomed the steep red western face of Aconcagua; in front of us an enormous snow slope led up to some rocky peaks which appeared to be the summit, but which really were the flanks of the gullies leading to the top; towards the north (our left), high up on the slope, a line of serrated rocks led right up to what appeared to be the highest peaks. The shortest way to these peaks was, undoubtedly, straight up the great snow slope; but the gradient was very steep, and Sir Martin Conway had impressed on me the importance of keeping well to the north-east in order to strike the couloir leading to the actual summit of the mountain; whereas if you took the most obvious route you got into a gully leading to the westernmost and slightly lower of the two peaks, over a dangerous arête with a drop of two miles on one side of you and 300 feet on the other. Under normal conditions the great snow slope that confronted us was a mass of loose rolling stones, extremely difficult to climb; but now, owing to the extraordinary snowfall of the previous winter, it was almost entirely covered with a thick layer of snow, in some places soft on the surface, in others as hard as ice. Thus my task was an easier one than that of any of my predecessors. Where the snow was soft at the top the going could not have been better; there was just enough plasticity to prevent back-sliding without any of the labour of plodding through deep snow. Where the snow was hard it was another matter. The slope was in most places so steep that the nails in my boots were powerless to prevent slipping, and consequently I had to have recourse to the ice-axe and cut steps, which was a slower but, I think, a less laborious process than climbing the treacherous screes beneath. Mr. Vines, in his excellent account of his ascent,² laments the short-sighted advice of his guide, Nicola Lanti, who persuaded him to cross the steep face of the mountain, instead of making a détour to the north-east in order to take advantage of the solid rocks which there fringe the slope.

¹ 'The wine.'

² *The Highest Andes*, p. 111.

Notwithstanding the marked difference between the snow conditions under which Mr. Vines made his ascent and those confronting me, I decided to do what Mr. Vines regretted not having done, and I set my face towards the long rib of solid foothold, prolonging the route in order to get a better one. About an hour after the start, as I was trudging mechanically on and hugging myself in my fur coat, I heard a shout behind me, and looking round I saw José, about three hundred yards below, standing in a woe-begone attitude.

Up through the still air came the words, 'Yo no soy vaqueano para Aconcagua,'¹ and then, to my speechless disgust, this villain of a fellow, rucksack and all, went off calmly down the snow towards the little green tent.

Fury possessed me as I thought of my lost lunch; I felt perfectly convinced at the time that José was leaving me purely and simply in order to change the position of the *vino* in which he felt such a fatherly interest. But from what I subsequently gathered, I believe that José, drink-sodden roustabout as he was and is, was suffering from *puna*, produced or exaggerated by the intense cold, which the poor devil had not the same means of combating that I had. The short and the long of it was that he was not properly clad for the higher levels of Aconcagua; for on the previous day no one supposed that he would have to go beyond the 19,000-foot camp. Still, even now, when the loss of that lunch has ceased to annoy me, I think that he might have had the decency to bring it up to me before turning back. But such a course might have involved his losing the *vino*; and I suspect that this consideration decided Master José. Certain it is that when I returned to the little green tent nearly thirty hours later there were only dregs enough left in the bottle for the rascal to be able to swear, truthfully indeed, that there was 'plenty for the *patron*.'

For increasing one's bodily vigour there is nothing like losing one's temper; no tonic invented by the faculty can touch it. I well remember when a friend and I were wearily plodding, foot-sore, bedraggled, and almost fainting—through the western slums of London at eleven o'clock at night having, the evening before, in Balliol, taken long odds to large amounts that we would not, or rather could not, walk the fifty-four miles between Oxford and London in eighteen hours—how three big policemen suddenly rushed out of a dark alley and made us prisoners, insisting that

¹ 'I am not a guide to Aconcagua.'

we were the burglars from the Uxbridge direction who had for so long been disturbing the peace of the metropolis.

We were within an ace of being locked up; that would mean the loss of our bets; the thought maddened us beyond words. Hubert, with his usual magnificent daring, was for knocking down all three policemen and escaping; but I pointed out to him in a whisper that we had both just sat down in the middle of the road from sheer exhaustion, whereas the policemen were beefy fellows who had evidently supped. As a last resource I informed our captors that my friend's father was a member of the House of Lords and that my own father was a member of the House of Commons, and that if we were detained we would move heaven to procure their dismissal from the force for our false imprisonment. This argument fortunately prevailed, and we were released. But whereas before this episode we were almost unable to drag one leg after the other, thereafter we moved with the jauntiest of gaits, and won our bets, hands down, about one in the morning. In like manner my rage against José stimulated my nervous energy, and by nine o'clock I had got appreciably nearer the north-eastern rocks. The sun was now very powerful, and I felt very hot in my long fur-coat, so I called a halt and took off both my fur-coat and my outside pair of gloves and laid them on the snow in a position which I felt sure I should recognise on my way back. Man proposes. My beautiful eleven-guinea fur-coat and my lovely baby gloves lie there to this day; perhaps there they will lie to the end of the world. Here I took the water-bottle off my back and tried to have a drink; but the screw-stopper was frozen, and I could not undo it. Fortunately it was vulcanite, and a blow from my knife broke it off; and fortunately all the water inside was not frozen, though a good deal of it was. Here, too, I discovered, to my great delight, a tiny-box of meat lozenges in the pocket of my leather jerkin; now I felt that if the worst came to the worst I should at any rate not starve for a day or two. Soon after this I passed the snowy region and got on to some hard rocks at the entrance of the couloir—a blessed relief after the wearisome step-cutting I had to resort to so often. Entering the gully I saw no more of the outside world; great red pinnacles towered on either side of the rocky road I had to climb. Here it was often necessary to use hands and knees over the piled-up rocks. The work was very severe, and I had to stop and rest at no long intervals.

I counted the number of steps I could take without stopping to rest, and found the average about twenty. The worst moment

of all was that immediately after stopping ; the breath, now that the lungs were no longer violently expanded in the effort of walking, seemed to leave the body, and several deep gasps were necessary to procure relief. The top of the couloir cost me the greatest efforts I had to make. Here there was no snow, and the rocky floor gave place to powdered detritus which afforded no foothold whatever. Often I fell on my face, panting, and as often slipped backwards three or four feet. But at last I got free from the couloir and its débris floor, and stood on what had appeared to me from the 19,000-foot camp to be the summit of the mountain.

It was not the summit, however : away in front of me, to the southwards, perhaps a mile away, stood out the twin peaks I had to reach. They appeared very little higher than the ground I was on ; but no doubt they were a thousand feet above me. To my amazement I saw the ground in front shelving downwards ; a great depression, full of rocks and stones, and entirely free from snow, fell away from me, and then rose, forming a sort of natural amphitheatre towards the summits. But my attention was soon absorbed in contemplating the view which I had obtained for the first time at this point.

The east and the west and the north were now disclosed in all their immense grandeur. Tier upon tier of snowy peaks stretched away in all directions ; beyond Torlosa on the west the Pacific, as on the previous evening, still lay dull and unresponsive to the sunshine ; there was a break in the white legions towards the north-east through which a broad stretch of the Argentine pampas glistened ; but elsewhere for hundreds of miles was nothing but ruddy spurs and marbled wastes and snowy pinnacles. But I did not wait long under the perfect cone of porphyry that formed the end of the couloir. I hurried on with renewed confidence : the sight of that nearing summit was worth more than all the port José had appropriated. The going was now much easier than it had ever been ; and in front the slope up to the final arête which runs in a huge arc along the southern face of Aconcagua, from the Horcones to the Vacas valleys, was less steep than the lower face of the mountain.

Up there in the open the air seemed more invigorating than in the narrow gully, and I should have been absolutely happy had not a tiny cloud warned me to make the most of my time. At last I reached the great arête, and looked over into that appalling 10,000-foot abyss. What a Tarpeian Rock from which to die ! Wouldn't there be a winged feeling of delight in the

soul that sinks into oblivion from such a colossal height? But again something urged me onwards: this time it was not a prudential consideration; it was a snowflake. I had not far to go now, which was lucky. I struggled on at the top of my speed, which was in truth a very poor walk, and at last my hopes were crowned. A cliff in front shut out the view; I scrambled up it, and in front of me stood Zurbriggen's stoneman. I was on the top of Aconcagua, and the time was half-past one.

From various sources I have gathered that it is the correct thing to leave your card on the top of a mountain. I had not brought a card with me, because I started up with the conviction that I should find the top of Aconcagua at home; and when I find people at home I never leave my card on them. Of course, active volcanoes' tops are apt to be out when one calls; and I suppose that fact has, by false analogy, extended the etiquette to all summits. But at the time I was thinking less of perpetuating myself on the top than of prolonging my existence at the bottom of the mountain. The thought had already occurred to me that the storm that was evidently brewing might last all day, perhaps even far into the night; if I stayed long where I was I should assuredly be killed. I remembered a passage in Sir Martin Conway's book (p. 103) in which he says that life would be impossible in a storm on the upper rocks of Aconcagua; and although my clothes and I were a little later the involuntary means of upsetting this theory, at this time I believed in it as gospel. So I left the inspection of Mr. Vines' thermometers to the next visitor; indeed my hands were now so cold that I doubt if I could have opened the cases. I pictured my poor wife sitting in that bare room at Inca alone, and Anacleto's tearful tale (I feel sure the poor fellow would have cried), and with one glance at the cairn I turned and hurried down the way I came. Half an hour later an enormous cloud rose off the Pacific, and in ten minutes the whole sky was darkened, and snow fell in deadly earnest. The rest is a confused mental tangle of intense cold, blinding snow, semi-darkness, crushing falls, despair, and the certainty of death. The further I went the worse grew the storm; soon I could only see a few feet in front of me. But I managed, as occasional rents in the pall of falling darkness helped me, to get upon the great northern snow slope, and blundered on, shouting in my agony for help—cries which the jeering rocks sent back to me unanswered. Twice on slippery hard snow I fell, and was at once whirled down the slope at a terrific pace. I clawed at

the snow with my axe, but it would not grip on the hard surface, and I felt myself whirling onward at lightning speed to destruction. It was a most horrible sensation. But both times by some miracle I came to a patch of stones which stopped me. How far I rolled in this way I know not, but it must have been some hundreds of feet.

All this part of the journey is very hazy in my mind. I remember sitting down, paralysed with despair, with fearful teeth-chatterings and shiverings shaking me; then I would call myself a coward and get up and go on for a few yards. But the deadly cold of that blizzard at 22,000 feet was fast overcoming me, and at last, as the storm still raged, I felt that I could go no further. I had wandered by this time on to a little promontory of rocks, which fell precipitously, as I found out next morning, to the slope 200 feet below. By the side of a big rock I saw a little scooped-out hollow in the snow: doubtless, thought I, this is my appointed grave. I sat down in it, quite glad to have ended the struggle, and looked at my watch. It was half-past four, and the snow was falling as thick as ever. Now I knew that I was done for. I took out my pocket-book and tried to trace a scrawl of farewell to my wife: it was unlikely that they would ever find my body, but still there was just a chance of it. That was the worst side of that last half-hour, as I fancied it, of my life. She had advised me strongly not to go; I had gone nevertheless; and now here was the end, and she would be alone.

Well, fortunately this sort of half-hour occurs very seldom; that one, I know, has brought me a fine crop of grey hairs. The teeth-chatterings and shiverings had gone now; a drowsy feeling came over me; I stretched myself on my back in my little grave, with my feet sticking over the precipice, and the divine Nature which comes to our rescue when our own thoughts would kill us carried me into the land of dreamless sleep.

When I awoke I thought I was dead. The crescent moon was riding through a sky of deepest metallic blue, against which the white peaks that on every side hedged in my view struck with an almost unearthly contrast. As I gradually comprehended the full glories of that magnificent scene exultation filled my soul. 'The kings of the world,' said I to myself, 'are not half as well buried as I am. If only men knew that the spirit hovers near the place where the body lies they would think less of the splendour of the mausoleum and more of its position. Shah Jehan built the

Taj for Nur Mahal; he had much better have sent her to the Himalayas. I always thought Rhodes a great man; now I think him greater than ever, for he must have known what happens after death. For he chose his sepulchre on the ridge of the Matoppos, and probably he is the only being outside China who has a decent post-mortem view. But here are you, a most insignificant fellow in life, turned into a kind of emperor of the dead, with a mausoleum higher and grander far than that of any human creature since the world began.' Then I began to rack my brain for a reason for my posthumous honours, and at length concluded, in the absence of more heroic virtues, that I must have been the only boy who never ill-treated a cat. There was a certain amount of cause, apart from the received tradition that people who go to sleep in snowstorms never wake up again, why I should believe in my bodily extinction. I was utterly without sensation of any kind in my limbs, and when I tried to move them they made no response.

The snow must have ceased soon after I lay down the previous evening, for I was only partly covered, and my feet stuck black out of the white mantle, with the toes turned inwards towards me in a horrible curl. The sight of those toes looking at me instead of at the sky made me feel rather squeamish, and, thought I to myself, if I can feel squeamish I can't be dead. So I began by trying to work my right arm, and after desperate efforts I broke it loose from the ice which had frozen it hard to the snow beneath. Examining my hand I found that the finger-tips of all the fingers were a mottled purple colour, and the nails of the second and third fingers were black. This frost-bite was due to the fact that in my efforts to clutch the snow in my two involuntary toboggans down the mountain I had worn all the finger-tips off my gloves. Then I worked my left arm loose, the elbow in both arms being the chief point of attachment to the snow; even now the skin over my elbow joints is red and rough. Having freed my arms I broke my back free from the ice the heat of my body had generated, by pressure on my elbows, and sat up and tried to work my legs. Here I was less successful: my legs seemed paralysed; I could not move them at all. At this stage in the proceedings my delight in having the finest tomb on earth was sorely dashed. Here was I tied to the top of Aconcagua like a dog to his kennel. Every man must die once, but I strongly resented having to go through the process a second time. The imminent probability of this event, notwithstanding all my resentment, gave me a strength which I had otherwise lacked.

After about half an hour's concentrated effort of will I succeeded in freeing my right leg, which appeared to be very nearly as useless free as it was tied, so numb and limp did it feel. With the left leg I had still more trouble. In trying to loosen it I must have wrenched the muscles in my groin, for they became exceedingly painful. At last I had both legs more or less at my command; but they obeyed orders very slowly and reluctantly, and the feet were both absolutely insubordinate.

All this time a wonderful sight was before me. The night gave way to the dawn; a faint twilight glimmered from behind the mighty bulk of Aconcagua and threw the giant's shadow far out into the distant sea; not a mere flat, intangible, two-dimensioned unreality like a common shadow, but a flesh-and-blood thing of length, breadth, and depth, lurid magenta-purple in colour, a gorgeous prism, stretching from the apex of the mountain in a straight line across his snow-clad satellites far into the Pacific. Higher and higher rose the sun; nearer and nearer, as though to greet him, came that royal purple-clad shadow from across the sea: it climbed up the side of the mountain, kissed its creator, and died.

I had now, being a free man, to face the situation. It was about five o'clock of a fine and sunny morning, and I had to get down to my 19,000-foot camp if I could, or to Inca, twenty miles away or more, if I couldn't. To enable me to do this I had with me ten partly frozen fingers, two completely frozen feet, and a small box of meat lozenges. I reckoned, knowing my stomach, which is a peculiar one, that the meat lozenges would keep me alive for three days. For at this time I had not the faintest hope of making either of my camps, having taken no bearings as I came up other than those afforded by the sun.

Aconcagua is such a huge mountain that one may be lost on it as easily as in the desert. As Mr. Fitzgerald says (p. 88), 'the slopes of this mountain are so vast that it would be easy to get hopelessly lost on them.' However, I had the sun to help me, as I knew that my course upwards from the 19,000-foot camp had been south with a touch of east in it. My difficulty was that I did not know how far or in what direction I had wandered during the snowstorm. I knew that the Horcones valley lay somewhere beneath me, as well as some very ugly precipices; if I could strike the valley I imagined I should get on somehow, even if I did not find the men and the mules. God only knows why I fancied I could have crossed the torrent alone; on my own legs I

should assuredly have been drowned. Sometimes it is just as well to be over-sanguine.

At five o'clock I got on to my feet, having made a magnificent breakfast of six meat lozenges. My toes still looked up into my face imploringly, but I could do nothing for them; so I told them to lie down and behave themselves. I knew that five or six hours' rubbing might save them; but I also knew that a frostbitten man who has been rubbed for five or six hours is in an acute state of agony, and good for nothing but shrieks of pain. Besides, I hadn't five or six good hours of daylight to waste; it was for me a matter of life or death to get down to the valley before sunset.

Now that I stood up I began to examine my lodgings. It was a buttress of the mountain—a tiny ledge of piled-up rocks, communicating with one flank of Aconcagua by a steep gully of hard snow, which fell away precipitously a little way below me. All the other approaches to the buttress were sheer precipices.

As I looked at this crow's nest I marvelled how I got there in safety. Blundering along in the snowy darkness there were a thousand chances to one that I had slipped down that steep couloir on to the gleaming snows far beneath. I had only about twenty yards of the gully to cross before it merged in the easy snow slope beyond. Those twenty yards cost me an hour's hard labour. In the first place the blizzard had not improved my nerve; and in the second my frostbitten fingers prevented my wielding the ice-axe with any great skill. I funked the business most thoroughly, but it had to be done if I was to get home. I dragged myself over the place at the rate of a foot a minute, making cavernous footholds for my cumbrous feet, and going more delicately than ever went Agag. But at last I got across, and sat down and returned thanks.

It was now six o'clock, and for two and a half hours I walked steadily downhill, keeping the approximate direction by means of the curved peak of Cuerno, near the base of which the 16,000-foot camp had been pitched. The fresh-fallen snow made the going rather easier than it had been the day before; but there were many places where the wind had swept it off the hard surface beneath, and these transitions gave me several awkward falls. Every nail had come out of my boots, and it was impossible to stand on the hard snow. I repeated my involuntary tobogganing experience of the previous evening on one occasion, and somehow or other, in my effort to put on the drag, I cut a chunk out of my cheek with the ice-axe. Before I had gone very far I pulled up

in the soft snow. During this descent my feet began to assert themselves; insubordination developed into flat mutiny. The increasing power of the sun was slowly thawing them out, and I found the process extremely unpleasant. I cannot hope to describe the pain, but I believe it is almost the same as that experienced by people who are burned. About half-past eight I saw a sight which made me pinch myself to find out whether I was awake or not. There, far below me, a dot of colour on the snow, was a little green tent. So far did I seem to have come, and so low down on the mountain, by comparison with Cuerno, did the tent appear, that I at once assumed that it was the 16,000-foot camp. I was wrong; it was the 19,000-foot camp, and when I was a couple of hundred yards away I managed to raise a shout, and immediately Anacleto and José came tumbling out, the latter brandishing the remnants of the *vino*. I felt inclined to brain the ruffian with my axe. At the moment I held him responsible for all my woes, the snowstorm included. Anacleto's eyes were better, but the poor fellow was in a state of great concern. As he told Dr. Cotton when he got back, '*Nosotros lo miravemos como muerto*' ('We looked upon him as a dead man'). The storm had descended on the men as well as on me, and they, with their large experience of blizzards at great altitudes, had never known a man exposed to one survive.

We wasted no time in useless palaver; I did not go inside the tent at all. Anacleto produced a blanket and hitched it on his back, and that was all the baggage we took with us.

The two men did all they could to make things easy for me. They supported me on either side, and simply pulled me over the snow. When we came to a steep face Anacleto put down the blanket, seated himself in front, and put me behind him, while José sat behind me. Then José shoved off, and we dashed down the slope at lightning speed. I enjoyed the sensation immensely; it was such a relief to be off my feet. At eleven we reached the base camp, after a toboggan which seemed likely to end in destruction. It was fine to see Anacleto dash his heels into the snow and stop us dead in mid-career, just as we were at the steep verge of the glacier. After this came a short walk, which just about finished me off; I could hardly move over the icy puddles of the moraine, and Anacleto had to pull me into the tent. There I thought I would eat something; I tried a biscuit, and then a bit of chocolate, but to me they both reeked foully of kerosene, and I trod them under foot in disgust. Then I fancied

a pipe would do me good. I had taken no tobacco at all up the mountain in order to keep my lungs at the top of their condition, and I felt a great longing for a smoke. But the first whiff almost made me sick: it was the kerosene again in gaseous form. I threw away my pipe and groaned. The next thing was to get a horse and go home. I found Manuel looking little the worse for his two days' surfeiting, and bade him go down the valley to where Ramón was pasturing his animals and fetch me back a horse with all possible speed. Then I drank about a bucketful of icy water, and felt much better. Suddenly I caught sight of a gruesome reflection in a small hanging glass. My face was literally black with sunburn, all except the tip of my nose, which was white, being frost-bitten; my lips were bigger than any negro's, cracked and bleeding; there was an open wound down my left cheek, from which the blood had congealed in ribbons to my throat. A six days' beard completed the picture.

Having nothing to do I went outside and rubbed my frost-bitten fingers with snow. Much to my astonishment, Anacleto came up with deprecating gestures and begged me to desist. It is a singular thing that these *peons*, who spend their winters combating frost-bite in the Cumbre, are ignorant of, or despise, the only remedy that is of any avail.

In about half an hour the worthy Ramón brought up several horses, and also his brother, whom I had not seen before, as he was not in my employ. For some occult reason this brother was sent home with me, Ramón instructing me that he answered to the same name as himself. I could not help admiring the consistency of the parents of the two Ramóns; but what ghastly confusion there must have been at home? Before I had time to ask Ramón whether he had any more brothers of the same name I had been hoisted into the saddle, and received the parting salute of my awed retainers.

I gather that they regarded me as an uncanny individual who had leagued with the powers of darkness to escape death. There I left them, and saw them no more. Poor Anacleto! You were a rare good man of your feet once upon a time, and you are better than most now; but I fear the chief constituent of those tears the snow-blindness wrung from you was *aguardiente*!

The man who habitually drinks too much alcohol may do far grander things, but he will not climb Aconcagua.

It took us just six hours to ride from the 16,000-foot camp to Inca. Ramón the less led the way, and my trusty little pony

followed. I could take very little interest in them or in anything else, for the pain in my feet, now heated by the vertical rays of a powerful sun, had become almost intolerable. On and on we went without any particular incident until we came to the Paso Malo. There Ramón dismounted and led his mule, while I sat still on my horse and watched them clinging to the narrow ledge above the rocky pool. One of our mules, who ought to have been feeding quietly miles away, suddenly appeared alongside, and rudely pushed past me on to the tiny track. The next thing I saw was Ramón's mule falling with the sound of rattling stones towards the torrent. Luckily she brought up on a sandy buttress, and stood there quivering. Ramón could do nothing to help her; but after a minute or two she jumped like a cat on to a rock beneath her, and thence on to safe ground. Now Ramón came back and pulled me off my horse, drove him safely over the pass, and then came back and helped me to follow on foot. I walked like an old, old man; my knees trembled with the agony of supporting my body on those gangrened lumps of corruption that had been my feet.

The stray mule came back to meet us, and nearly knocked us both into the abyss, and now the laconic Ramón lapsed for once into unparliamentary language. But it was all over in a few minutes, and I got on my horse again—for the last time. Twice we forded the river side by side without mishap, and the end of the journey, where the grass-clad valley widened near the little lake, seemed close at hand. All the way down the valley I had heard the most entrancing music; the air seemed vibrant with the melodies of an unseen ærial orchestra; I could hear the diapasons of the deep bassoons and the insistent clang of the trombones fused into harmony by the pleading voices of the violins. And yet I could hardly keep from tears. I should see her again now, after all; but how nearly had that kiss by the hotel steps been our last! The tears would run now; I groaned; but fortunately Ramón did not look back.

By this time he was quite used to the sound.

REGINALD RANKIN.

Note.—On December 20 the writer's toes were amputated about two inches behind the metatarsal phalangeal joints.

The Sergeant's Idea.

'A WISE man,' said the sergeant, 'will often be a fool, but a fool will never be anything else. And a few wise men are worth more than a heap of fools, or perhaps even than a heap of wise men. And a few fools are worth more than a heap of fools. As how? Thus. When we were at Parda, up in what they call the Hinterland, beyond Bamboa, which is on the west coast of Africa, the lieutenant and I, and a sergeant of the "Lions," the King's Own, and two hundred of our niggers made a reconnaissance. When we were three days' march beyond Parda, we became aware of a big crowd of niggers, who seemed to wish to bar our way. We judged that by the fact that no fewer than two thousand of them came up against us with all the weapons they could muster—bows and arrows, spears, and such things. Those of them who had trade guns, with gallant disregard of the danger to the men at the butt ends of the old gas-pipes, fired them off at us. At last the lieutenant said :

"Sergeant Harding, the men, for raw blacks, have stood very well. But they're getting a bit out of hand now, and there are at least a dozen down. Do you think any of yours have enough grit in them to cover the—er—retirement?"

"Well, sir, I don't feel very sure of them. Their fellow-heathens have put the fear of God into them. But I'll try with them."

'They stood—oh, yes, they stood—ever so much better than I'd ever expected to see them stand. I retired them by alternate half-sections. The retiring half-section did its work thoroughly, and retired for all it was worth. The covering half-section did not seem to have its heart in its work quite so much as the other had, but when I saw a man getting nervous I distracted his attention from the enemy by attacking him in the rear with my boot. They would rather face a possible bullet than a certain ammunition-boot. The difficulty with me was to keep in touch

with the two half-sections. If I left the covering half-section, it had a tendency to be afraid of bullets, and if I left the retiring half-section, it had a tendency to keep on retiring. But I kept them up to the scratch with all the abusive terms that I had been able to pick up out of their language, and filled up the gaps with a little Tommy language at the top of my voice. It is more the noise you make than what you say. And, when language of all kinds failed, I recollected that some philosopher before me had said, "Actions speak louder than words." Now, I have always been a bit of a philosopher myself—that is, with regard to other folks—and I brought in the boot. When night fell the attack dropped off bit by bit till it ceased, and we rejoined the main body.

"Very good, very good indeed, sergeant," said the lieutenant.

"They're all plucky, sir," said I, "our niggers and the other niggers too. They're very handy in a free fight, and they enjoy it as much as if they were Irish members of Parliament."

"Yes, sergeant. But what I was surprised to see was how well they kept on the defensive in retiring. A rear-guard action is trying to the best troops."

"It was their fear for their rear that kept them up, sir."

"Oh," said the lieutenant, in a puzzled way. It would never do for an officer to acknowledge to an N.C.O. that he didn't understand.

"We seem to have beaten off the enemy, sir."

"No, you mustn't congratulate yourself on having done quite as much as that, sergeant. You ought to know by now that black men are very superstitious, and that they dislike doing anything at night for fear of evil spirits. Even our own trained blacks won't do anything in the dark unless they are led by white men. These natives who attacked us have certainly formed a camp for the night; you can even see from here the fires they have lighted to keep off evil spirits."

"Yes, sir. I judge them to be about three miles off."

"That is about it."

"Couldn't we push on a bit, sir, while they are resting?"

"No. You had the best of the men, and your men were kept going by the fact that they were fighting. But the bulk of the main body are clean done, and many of them couldn't march another mile."

"Can't we leave them behind, sir?"

"Not to be killed and eaten, though it would do the enemy

good, and serve them right, to let them eat some of our niggers. There is nothing for it but to camp till the morning, and then to carry on as before."

"So the lieutenant and I and the Lion took our rations together, for when you are schooling niggers in West Africa there is more difference between a white man and a black man than there is between an officer and an N.C.O.

"It reminds me, sir," said the Lion, with his mouth full, "of what happened in '57, in the Mutiny, to my father, who was then corporal in the——"

"Thank you, sergeant," said the lieutenant, "but I've often heard of things which remind you of what happened to your relations. And I must say that I never—out of the Engineers, that is—knew, in spite of the fact that, on the surface, you appear a little heavy, a more lively imagination in drawing parallels. But please get that Maconochie out of your mouth before telling us any more."

"(If you're admitted to mess with officers, you have to pay for it.)

"Maconochie, sir," said the Lion indignantly; "*mine's* only bully-beef."

"Well, we'll share and share alike to-night," said the lieutenant, "so long as we have no reminiscences."

"I don't know, sir," said the Lion steadfastly, "that I can promise you no reminiscences, because they may do you good. And, although you are my officer, I am always willing to do you good."

"That's kind of you, sergeant. Generally people are opposed to those over them."

"There is a more important matter for me, sir. They may do me good. There was a newspaper man called O'Donovan, who was always nosing about to get information. The way he asked questions was by telling other people tales. And one tale he told me was about a man called Skobelev, who made a big name in the Russo-Turkish War. It appears that, like ourselves, a Russian column was once retreating——"

The lieutenant frowned. I gave the Lion a judicious kick while the lieutenant pretended not to see. The Lion looked a little flabbergasted; then he understood, and went on:

"A Russian column was strategically retiring, under General Trotsky, from Namangan, because it numbered only eight hundred men. Skobelev proposed a night attack on the six thousand

Khokandians who were in pursuit. He carried it out with a hundred and fifty Cossacks, and it was quite successful."

"Sergeant," said the lieutenant like a flash, "that's your idea, and you shall carry it out to-night. How many men do you want?"

"The Lion was knocked galley-west.

"I'd rather you carried it out, sir," said he respectfully, when he had recovered his moral wind. "It wants a man who is quick at the uptake, and I never was a Skobelev myself. Now, if it had been my uncle in the Horse-Gunners——"

"I must stop with the main body," said the lieutenant. "They'll cut and run if they are left in camp without one of us."

"Then I'd like Sergeant Harding with me, sir, and the black sergeant, Big Tom, and sixty good men."

"Do you think that will be enough?" asked the lieutenant.

"I remember, if what Mr. O'Donovan told me was right, sir, that Skobelev had only a hundred and fifty against six thousand."

"All right, sergeant. I don't question your reminiscences, but what General Skobelev had doesn't prove what you ought to have. As you yourself said, you are not a Skobelev, so take as many as you think you want."

"Sergeant Harding, Big Tom, and sixty men will be quite enough, sir," said the Lion, who was an obstinate man.

"When will you start?"

"About twelve, sir. I shall take twenty men on the right flank, Sergeant Harding twenty men on the left flank, and Big Tom twenty men for a frontal attack. The frontal attack will be the easiest, if I judge the ground right. We shall be all in position before one o'clock. Allow half an hour for delay or going astray, and we shall all attack at half-past one, when I send up a rocket from the right flank. That will be at the darkest time."

"Make it a quarter-past one, sergeant," said the lieutenant. "If the others are not up by a quarter of an hour after time, they will either have entirely lost their way or they will have been cut up. In either case they will be no use to you, and, though our blacks will fight when properly led, they won't bear waiting in the middle of the night. Even trained white soldiers want some nursing for that."

"Very good, sir," said the Lion, and at twelve o'clock we started.

"With my twenty men I crept on and on through the dense

bush, wherein we heard the forest beasts rustling their way through the underwood. Once, for a moment, I saw a pair of yellow eyes glare full into mine, and I brought my rifle to the charge. I was in mortal fear of treading on a snake, which is a thing I hate. Taking one thing with another, I think the niggers, when they object to night expeditions, are certainly right.

'But at last we got close on the left flank of the enemy, and there came a time of waiting which seemed hours. I found the lieutenant had been quite right in saying that a quarter of an hour was enough. That quarter's wait in the dark as a C.O., without anyone with whom to rub shoulders, being miles above all sympathy and advice, seemed a whole long night to me. I give you my word, it's more companionable and cosier to be in the ranks than to be an officer. The only companionship I had was the chattering behind me of the teeth of the niggers, who were both cold and afraid, and it was all I could do to keep my own from chattering. Just when I thought I could hold on no longer, up went the Lion's rocket with a whiz. It was better to me than the Crystal Palace on a Thursday, or Brock's Benefit, or even than the Policemen's Fête. I never saw a finer display of fireworks than that rocket. We fired a volley, jumped up, and ran in with the bayonet. When I met the Lion, five minutes later, in the middle of the enemy's camp, there was not a live and unwounded adversary who was not running for his life, for an untrained black man who wakes up in the middle of the night, to see what he thinks is a fiery serpent in the air, and to feel what he knows is a bayonet in his stomach or the small of his back, develops running powers not to be got by training. And we let them run; we were pleased to see it. Next morning, after occupying the camp all night, we marched to our main body. The lieutenant turned out to meet us.

"What did you do, sergeant?"

"We buried three of the enemy, sir, and have ten prisoners and one hundred and twenty guns."

"Where are the rest of the enemy?"

"I don't *know*, sir," said the Lion, "but I should *think* they are about in Zanzibar by now."

"I'm proud of you, sergeant," said the lieutenant. "It was a very ticklish operation with so few men."

"No, sir," said the Lion with a blush; "it reminds me of what Mr. O'Donovan said Skobelev said. Irregular troops, even

of the very bravest, are subject to panics. A night attack is the most nerve-shaking of fights; for irregular troops, if their lines are penetrated, it means destruction. The object being not to cut to pieces, but to strike terror, a small number can make as much noise as a large one. A small party is less liable to confusion and to killing each other. If a small party is destroyed, the destruction does not endanger the main body."

"Thank you, sergeant, very much," said the lieutenant. "But I will not tax your memory any further. I shall recommend you for the D.C.M."

"District court-martial, sir?" said the Lion, with open mouth.

"Not this time, sergeant—Distinguished Conduct Medal."

G. STANLEY ELLIS.

*Maeve of the Battles*¹

I HAVE seen Maeve of the Battles wandering over the hill,
 And I know that the deed that is in my heart is her deed;
 And my soul is blown about by the wild wind of her will,
 For always the living must follow whither the dead may lead.
 I have seen Maeve of the Battles wandering over the hill.

I would dream a dream at twilight of ease and beauty and
 peace—

A dream of light on the mountains, and calm on the restless
 sea;

A dream of the gentle days of the world when battle shall cease,
 And the things that are in hatred and wrath no longer shall be.
 I would dream a dream at twilight of ease and beauty and peace.

The foamless waves are falling soft on the sands of Lissadil,
 And the world is wrapped in quiet and a floating dream of
 gray;

But the wild winds of the twilight blow straight from the haunted
 hill,

And the stars come out of the darkness and shine above Knock-
 narea.

I have seen Maeve of the Battles wandering over the hill.

There is no rest for the soul that has seen the wild eyes of Maeve;

No rest for the heart once caught in the net of her yellow hair;

No quiet for the fallen wind, no peace for the broken wave;

Rising and falling, falling and rising, with soft sounds every-
 where.

There is no rest for the soul that has seen the wild eyes of Maeve.

¹ Maeve was an ancient warrior queen of Connaught, the heroine of the Táin Bo Cuailgne and other wars. The country people say she is buried under the cairn on Knocknarea near Sligo.

I have seen Maeve of the Battles wandering over the hill,
And I know that the deed that is in my heart is her deed ;
And my soul is blown about by the wild wind of her will,
For always the living must follow whither the dead would lead.
I have seen Maeve of the Battles wandering over the hill.

EVA GORE-BOOTH.

Canada in the Sixties.

NEAR the head-waters of the Ottawa River, and some twelve miles from Lake Temiscaming, there is a small lake surrounded with woods. It is about three-quarters of a mile long and from two to five hundred yards across, and of irregular form, but of good depth, as nearly all these small Canadian lakes are. These 'ponds,' as they are called by the inhabitants, are numerous in all parts of the British American possessions, and the term 'pond' is applied to very much larger bodies of water than this. Lakes of ten or twelve square miles area are 'ponds' in local parlance; sheets of water, which in other countries would be esteemed considerable, sinking into insignificance in the proximity of the vast lakes which are the most remarkable feature of this part of America.

On the banks of the tiny lake I have mentioned, the surface of which, I suppose, was about a hundred and fifty acres in extent, I established myself in the summer of 1865, being at the time not seventeen years old. I had as companions two Indians, a half-breed and the wife and daughter of the latter. The men were hunters, seeking furs for the Hudson Bay Company, and intended to trap and hunt in the neighbourhood of this lake during the ensuing winter; and I joined with them for the sake of companionship and mutual help while exploring this district.

The lake swarmed with fish, as nearly all, even the smallest of them, do. I have frequently found pools of only an acre or two in extent crowded with fish; and no matter how small these woodland ponds may be, they all seem to be permanent. I could never find that any of them dry up, even in the hottest summers.

There are at least a dozen different species of fish inhabiting the small lakes and ponds. I do not mean that the ponds are their exclusive habitat, or that all the species are found in one lake. Many of them are found only in certain lakes; and most of them inhabit running waters as well as lakes.

The most abundant in Wolf Pond, as the Indians called it, was the pickerel, which is not dainty eating, but is a valuable fish to the Indians and trappers, owing to the facility with which it may be caught in winter-time. When the lakes are frozen, if a hole is broken in the ice and a live bait used, they may be pulled out as fast as the hooks can be baited; and it is usual to have many lines in use at the same time. The great difficulty is to discover the spot in the water where the fish are lying. To do this you may have to break a line of holes nearly right round the lake; but you may rely on it that the fish will always be in large shoals, and that if they once commence to bite you will have good sport. They are not often found in the middle of the lake, but they like twenty or thirty feet of water, and therefore do not come inshore. A fragment of meat may be used as a bait; but tiny fish, called in Canada minnows and sticklebacks (which they are not), are the best and surest bait.

In our pond there were two kinds of 'bass.' There are four kinds found in the fresh waters of this region. They have received the name 'bass' from the colonists, and I am not aware that they are misnamed, but I have not been able to discover the specific name of any of the species mentioned in this account. The two kinds here were the white bass and the striped bass, the latter a handsome fish, but neither running to a greater size than the pickerel. There were also mullet and grey trout, which are often called salmon-trout, and the largest of those which I caught weighed about four pounds; but in some of the neighbouring streams I caught them of more than double that weight. There were no fish in the pond of a greater weight than four or five pounds; but in the rivers there were fish of vastly greater size and also in the large lakes of the district—Temiscaming and Grand.

Wolf Pond was a favourite haunt of my companions—almost their home, in fact—because here they were generally sure of a good supply of fish, though in the winter, when the water was frozen, it was sometimes difficult to get the pickerel to bite, and the other fish rarely did so. The squaw and her daughter (a girl of eighteen) performed most of the fishing, and, I am sorry to say, the greater part of the hard work about the camp. But this they seemed to think quite their natural employment, and I never heard either of them murmur or complain.

Near Wolf Pond (which is not marked on the maps) game was

not plentiful, nor is it in any part of the British possessions compared with what it is, or used to be, in the parts of the continent possessing a more genial climate. Pelt-bearing animals had to be sought for far and near; and the Indians, of whom there were several families near the pond, used to take excursions in all directions, remaining away many days at a time, leaving their squaws and children to catch and dry fish, and to cultivate a little grain during the summer.

The pond was closely surrounded with woods, mostly composed of pine trees; but farther back there were maples, hemlocks, junipers, and many others, and several cedar swamps, in places with the trees growing so closely together that it was impossible for a man to move about among them. The gloom in these swamps was so deep that a watch could not be read unless it was held close to the eyes. There were also swamps in which no cedars grew, but the ground was overrun with bushes, and these were favourite spots for many of the wild fruits which grow in the Canadian district. Here there were cranberries in abundance, a fruit much esteemed in all the American districts where it grows. Gathering them was a ticklish business, for the favourite habitat of the bush was a treacherous peat-moss into which I more than once suddenly sank in an alarming manner.

A curious bird frequenting the trees, and often wandering about the camp in the boldest manner, was a bird called by the employés of the Hudson Bay Company the 'whisky-jack'; but for what reason I could not discover. It greatly resembles the great grey shrike (*Lanius excubitor*) of Europe, being about the size of a missel-thrush; but the feathers are so loose and abundant that it looks a much larger bird than it really is. It is a noisy and a greedy bird, being particularly fond of scraps of meat and fat; and instructed by one of the Indians, I lay on the ground, covered with green boughs, and with the hand extended with a piece of fat in it I captured many by suddenly closing the fingers when they came for the bait. They cried loudly and pecked fiercely, but were not much frightened; for when released they flew to the nearest trees or bushes, and after shaking and arranging their feathers, and uttering a few angry notes, came back to look for more scraps.

The half-breed I have mentioned was the son of an Englishman by a half-breed woman. His name was Andrew Whitting, and he was married (according to Indian custom) to an Indian woman named Chompel, abbreviated colloquially to 'Chom.' His daughter,

Emma, had been christened a Protestant, and was a charming girl. She and her father could read and write a little, and were Christians. The Indians, Monchuapiganon ('Deep Waters,' in the Cree language) and Chuckochilgegan ('Cunning Polecat'), were elderly men about fifty and sixty years old respectively. They were Crees from the shores of Hudson's Bay, and their names being such awkward ones to pronounce, I took the liberty of styling them Tom and Sam, familiar names to which they took kindly enough. Those two men were brothers, and Chuckochilgegan, or Sam, was the father of Whitting's wife. He had had three squaws, one of whom was drowned in an accident while shooting some rapids; and another, he told me, was starved to death in a hard season; deaths from such causes being not an unusual occurrence, formerly, in the North-West.

Tom, the younger of the two Indians, had never had a wife; an unusual circumstance among red men. He was a man of very taciturn disposition; and though he liked to hunt, fish, and wander about the woods in my company, we often spent an entire day together without speaking a dozen sentences. I think he had met with some disappointment or injury that had soured him; but an Indian does not like to be questioned on such matters.

The summer of 1865 was not as hot as usual, according to the Indians. I, however, was surprised to find so great a degree of heat in so high a latitude; but it is to be remembered that at this time I was an inexperienced boy, knowing nothing of the land whither I had come to pitch my tent, and every experience was to me new and striking to the point of the wonderful. According to the same authority the winter set in late. The lake was almost completely covered with thin ice on October 4. It is said that fogs are almost unknown to Canada, but there was a dense one here on the 6th. It cleared away at noon, and for a week there was great heat again; yet I noticed that nearly every small bird, and most of the larger ones, had migrated by the end of the first week of the month. On the night of the 11th there was a sharp frost, and when I arose in the morning the scene was one of surprising beauty. The frost had completely changed the appearance of the forest, the leaves of which were now rich with every tint of red, yellow, and orange, presenting a sight which, for richness of colour and variety, cannot be described. Frost succeeded frost, and in three days there was a sheet of ice over the pond strong enough to permit of its being traversed in all directions. There

was no snow till the 23rd, when several light showers fell, just covering the ground. Thenceforward there was more daily, till, at the end of the month, it was perhaps a foot deep, and the Indians prepared to start on the first of their hunting expeditions.

I, of course, joined with my friends Andrew Whitting (the half-breed), Monchuapiganon (Tom), and Chuckochilgegan (Sam); all of them old hands and experienced hunters. Andrew at first thought to take the squaw and his daughter; but the two Indians opposed the intention, as, I need scarcely say, I did myself, thinking it cruelty to expose two women to the hardships of forest life; though, it is to be noted, I did not at this time know how hardy the Indian women are, nor that camping-out in this severe climate is by no means so trying as may be imagined.

Our first expedition consisted of a journey to some extensive pine woods to the north-east, where we and several other parties were attracted by numerous wolf-tracks. This district was much infested by wolves, whence the Indian name of the pond. The various parties of hunters kept widely apart; in fact, we saw none of our neighbours, except in going and returning.

There was but little snow on the ground, and that little loose, so that snow-shoes were not used. We took one hand-sleigh; and I, for my own convenience, carried a kettle, pot, and some cocoa and other luxuries; and my muzzle-loading Enfield rifle and a Colt six-shooter, a heavy, cumbersome weapon, but of great power. Breech-loading firearms were scarcely heard of at this period; but I have always been in favour of muzzle-loading weapons for shooting dangerous animals. As a consequence of my experience during the first year or two of my sojourn in America, I had a couple of double-barrelled muzzle-loading muskets, with plenty of metal in the breeches, specially made for me; and they were ever after my favourite weapons. I used a rifle only for distant shots, and a breech-loader for birds. I may add that a good gun, like a good wife, is not to be picked up every day; and that gentlemen having arms made for them should go to Birmingham and make their own arrangements for their weapons. For all the so-called London guns are made there; though, possibly, they are put together in the City. Pay a maker his price, but insist that the weapon shall be capable of a pre-arranged performance; and then when you find yourself within six paces of a grizzly or black bear you will have nothing to fear.

We reached the wood which was our destination at nightfall.

The intervening country was well timbered, being, in fact, forest land ; but this spot was said to be a favourite haunt of the wolves, and consisted of an extensive tract of pine forest, with few or no other trees. I suppose that the great number of hares here was the attraction to the wolves. These hares, called wood-hares by the trappers, presented a motley appearance ; for they were just beginning to turn white. These were the *Lepus americanus* of the naturalists, and not the wood-hares of the States, which do not change colour in the winter. The ground they occupied was hilly ; and they were most abundant on the outskirts of a wood facing nearly north-east, where there was a tract of ground covered with thorny bushes with hare tracks between. The hares, if not actually gregarious, were thickly scattered about ; and we had a couple of brace, which I shot, for supper ; but they were as flavourless as the mountain-hare. I could have shot at least a couple of dozen, for they had a habit of crouching under the bushes until closely approached, thus affording a fixed mark for the Colt revolver, with which I knocked them over, steadying my hand against a tree.

My companions objected to this firing, alleging that it would alarm the wolves. That the Canadian wolf is as cowardly as that found farther south in the States is certain, and yet it is a vicious and dangerous brute. There were about here also a number of red foxes, and these certainly preyed on the hares ; for I found bones and fragments of skin in the lairs of the foxes.

Arriving on the ground where it was intended to pass the night, my companions cleared away the snow, and formed a dome-shaped hut about four feet high, capable of containing the four of us. Loose snow being piled over this structure, and a good fire made close to the entrance, we had a warm and comfortable sleeping-place for the night, and many other nights afterwards, in this or a similar hut. No bedroom in an English house could have been warmer. Of course we had our blankets with us, and a thick bed of spruce boughs under us. The hut, I should have said, was constructed of spruce boughs ; and the trees I have loosely spoken of as pines were really the hemlock spruce (*Abies canadensis*). The forests of this tree presented a fine spectacle, growing to a height of sixty or seventy feet, and clustering in the valleys or ravines between the hills. There were two other kinds of spruce firs here : the red spruce, growing in the swamps, and a species I could not identify, growing in clusters only in very sheltered situations.

The novelty of the situation, I suppose, together with my over-tired condition, rendered me restless during the night, and I slept but little. There was a slight breeze blowing, and this caused a peculiarly sad yet musical sound among the firs. But this was the only noise that disturbed the stillness of the night. I listened intently, hoping to hear the distant howling of the wolves; but no animal uttered its cry throughout the hours of darkness. Towards morning a fox sneaked up, and seized a hare-skin. I threw my knife at it, but missed, and the noise thereby occasioned aroused my companions, who arose, though it was still quite dark, and prepared for the labours of the day.

First, we had breakfast, consisting of cakes made of roughly pounded corn, with dried fish, and the cocoa which I had brought. The breakfast was not a heavy one; but the Indians do not eat very heartily in the early morning. They prefer an evening meal, when the labour of the day is over; then, indeed, they are first-class examples of trenchermen.

Before daylight the traps were unpacked, and with the first streak of dawn we started to set them. We had a dozen strong steel traps, like those used by keepers to catch foxes, but larger. These traps are procured from the Hudson Bay Company's posts, and are, I should think, made specially for their service. They are furnished with several yards of strong chain, for they must be secured to a branch, or tree, to prevent the fox or wolf walking away with them when caught. And the trap, as well as the chain itself, must be hidden under the snow, or these cunning brutes will not go near it. The bait, in this case consisting of the entrails and skins of the hares, was not placed on the trap, but cut up into small pieces and scattered around it; so that, in walking about to gather them, the wolf or fox might accidentally step upon it. If the bait were placed in the trap, no wolf or fox could be caught if you tried till doomsday, so wide-awake are these creatures.

The Indians, before handling the traps, carefully rubbed their hands with the entrails, so as to cover the scent of their fingers, and used every precaution to leave as few traces of their presence as possible, wiping out the marks of their feet in the snow with a spruce bough. The traps were placed a considerable distance apart—perhaps a quarter of a mile—at spots where the Indians found traces of wolves or foxes. These traces consisted of the remains of animals preyed upon, and footmarks, and a few other signs which I could not discern, though my friends detected them

quickly enough. But the general opinion was that there were not yet many wolves about here.

The selecting of suitable spots and setting the traps occupied a great part of the day, and we returned to our temporary hut to partake of the evening meal, having had nothing to eat during the time we were at work. On the way back my friends knocked over several hares with sticks and stones, and these were stewed, or rather boiled, for supper, and eaten up to the last mouthful.

During our absence the foxes had paid our halting-place a visit, and wandered all around it. Fortunately such a visit had been anticipated, and every article eatable, or made of leather, hung on the branches of trees out of their reach; for these little wretches, and wolves, are so exceedingly voracious that they will tear to pieces and eat a pair of boots, or a belt, in a surprisingly few minutes. It is not safe to leave anything of the kind, or any sort of food, within their reach.

I could have shot several foxes, but my companions begged me not to fire any more, saying that the shot would injure the pelt and make it valueless. The real reason was fear of frightening away the wolves; for it is a fact that these creatures soon learn to fear the report of a gun, and a few shots fired within their hearing will often drive them quite out of a neighbourhood. The skins of wolves are of much more value than those of the common sorts of foxes.

The second night spent in the forest I slept 'like a top,' being completely worn out; but I was aroused by my companions at dawn to partake of breakfast, which they had prepared before disturbing me. They were in a hurry to visit the traps to see if anything had been taken during the night, at which time the animals, and wolves especially, prowl about more than during daylight. Only one of the traps had an occupant—a poor little red fox, caught by both fore-paws, which howled or whined pitifully as we approached. A single blow on the head quieted him for ever.

We had visited all the traps and were back at the camping-place before noon, and the rest of the day was spent in looking for something to eat. Sam had discovered the tracks of cariboo deer in the snow, and proposed to follow them up. The tracks, however, were not fresh; and considering how few hours of daylight remained, it was thought better to defer attempting to stalk them until the following morning. It was arranged that Tom and myself should undertake this work while the others

attended to the traps, and we started before break of day. The tracks were easy enough to follow, but it was a long time before we found any that had been recently made, and then we took a circuit of seven or eight miles to avoid the chance of the deer scenting us; for these cautious animals are the most easily alarmed of any American deer, and all are jealous of the neighbourhood of man.

I watched anxiously for the appearance of the deer, but the only signs of them that I could perceive were the traces of their broad hoofs in the snow. In reply to a remark of mine that I feared we should not overtake our game, Tom waved his hand towards the forest below us and said, 'Cariboo dare. All right. Hab shot by-um-by.' And so we continued on our way so silently that these were almost the only words spoken during the whole day. I was dressed much in the Indian fashion, and wore moccasins, so that we moved like ghosts, absolutely without sound.

In the afternoon Tom intimated that it would not be possible to overtake the deer that day, and proposed that we should camp out, as going back to our companions would amount to giving up the chase. Though we were almost without food, I consented; for, apart from the fact that I did not like to appear chicken-hearted before an Indian, I was possessed with a boyish anxiety and excitement to have a shot at a deer, an experience which I had not yet enjoyed. Among the Indians it is not unusual for the hunters to go an entire day, or perhaps two, without food when engaged in the chase; not from choice, but through dire necessity.

We constructed a temporary hut, similar to the one already described, to pass the night in, and our supper consisted of a few pieces of corn-cake, made of the coarse flour, ground, or pounded between two stones by the squaws. As there were no hares here, or other small animals or birds, we had to do without meat; and our only drink was the bitingly cold water from a small rill, which we had to break four inches of ice to obtain. We had the comfort of a large fire, however, and there is a surprising amount of cheerfulness to be acquired from a good fire in these silent wildernesses, as everywhere else.

Another early start, this time without a breakfast, but with the comforting assurance of Tom that we should 'hab plenty venison presently.' We toiled, however, for some six hours through the forest, where, as yet, there was scarcely any snow, there not having been falls heavy enough to cover the ground

under the trees. There was no brushwood, or even herbage, in this forest, and the ground was covered with a thick carpet of fir spines, the accumulation of many seasons, which was as soft to the foot as the finest Turkish carpet. Through this dense forest, where the light was but dim even at noon, the unerring eye of the Indian traced the course of the cariboo. So clear were the tracks to his discernment that our pace was scarcely checked in following them. I could see myself, here and there, where the carpet of decayed leaves, or fir spines, had been disturbed, and also the broken branches and saplings, snapped by the weight of the animals, or nibbled as they passed.

It was early afternoon before we came up with the herd, which seemed to number about seventy. They were scattered about among the trees in an open part of the forest, and were resting, a few browsing on the tops of the very young spruce saplings. They were some two hundred yards away, on lower ground than that where we stood, and had not the slightest suspicion of our presence. The Indian had previously cautioned me that the utmost noiselessness was necessary, for the deer would bolt the moment they detected us, and in the present state of the ground it would be impossible to overtake them a second time.

Using the utmost care to keep ourselves concealed and avoid noise, we managed to creep fifty yards nearer. A further advance without discovery was impossible; but the nearest deer was quite a hundred and fifty yards off, double the distance that Tom's common musket would carry with anything like accuracy. Partly by whisper, partly by gesture, he intimated that he would move to the right to a hollow way along which he thought the deer would fly, and take his chance of a running shot. I was to give him time to reach his post, and then pick off the animal I had marked to try my skill on.

My excitement was intense. I actually trembled with eager anxiety to secure my prize. I had never yet shot anything bigger than a hare, and I was possessed with all the enthusiasm of a young sportsman. When I thought that Tom must have reached the hollow way, I, crouching behind a bush, took steady aim and fired. The cariboo fell on his knees and rolled over on his back, but he immediately strove to rise again, and was quickly on his legs. I rushed forward, shouting like a mad fellow, oblivious of everything but the fear of losing my victim, and never noticed the sound of the shot which Tom fired as some of the herd rushed past him. My buck hobbled along on three legs at

a good speed, and I lost sight of him for a minute or two several times ; but he was badly hurt, and the thick stream of blood on the ground enabled me to follow him as fast as I could run (I was lame, and could not run as fast as an ordinary man), and presently he fell again, and I came up and finished him with a shot in the head from the Colt six-shooter.

This was my first deer, and I believe I fairly danced with wild joy at my success. I know that I shouted myself hoarse, and had a sore throat in consequence.

Tom had also had a successful shot, so needless to say that cariboo meat was abundant enough at supper that evening, and as I was ravenously hungry, I think I made the heartiest meal I have ever devoured ; and my sleep after it was profound and sweet, until I was aroused by the sound of a musket-shot. The wolves, it seems, had been attracted by the smell of blood, and Tom had shot one that had been bold enough to come close up to our fire.

I should certainly never have been able to find my way back to the camp ; but the Indian seemed to take a bee-line to it, and without difficulty found our way. After-experience made me a better woodman ; but without a careful noting of objects and bearings it is very easy to become inextricably lost in these vast forests. The Indians, though seeming to go carelessly along, are really most acute observers, noting objects that seem very commonplace to novices, and though making none but mental notes, never forgetting a mark or sign.

Owing to the character of the ground and other circumstances, I can give no idea of the distance traversed on this occasion ; but we did not reach Sam and Andrew until nearly nightfall.

The next morning Tom and Andrew went for the rest of the cariboo meat, taking the hand-sleigh with them, and leaving the care of the traps to Sam and me. To save time when examining the traps Sam and I went different ways, each attending to half the traps. The first that I came to contained a dead, and the second a living, fox ; then I found a wolf. The cunning brute was lying on its side quite motionless, and I supposed it to be dead ; but when I was about to handle it it sprang at my throat, uttering a savage growl. Fortunately it was held firmly by the fore-paw, and it only succeeded in reaching my leg, which was encased in a strong leather legging, and further protected with the irons which I was compelled to wear. The flesh was bruised and grazed, but I was not actually bitten. The irons were bent,

and bore the mark of the brute's teeth, and the legging was torn. It is said that the wolf sometimes bites pieces out of the man or beast which it seizes, and I know from experience that it will rip a dog, or other small animal, to shreds in a few seconds, so fierce and strong of jaw is it.

I killed my savage foe with a blow from my tomahawk. It was the only wolf trapped on this occasion.

The fall of my first buck gave me such pleasure that I was anxious to repeat the exploit. There were, however, no deer in the immediate neighbourhood of the huts, and continual falls of snow made distant journeys undesirable for a time. At length, however, we had fine, bright weather, with the surface of the snow frozen hard. This was the condition required for snow-shoe travelling, and I took my first lessons in this method of progression.

Some deer, such as wapiti and moose, often get surrounded by deep snow, which they tread down for a limited distance, forming a kind of pit, or hollow, from which they cannot escape. Such hollows are called moose or wapiti 'yards,' and usually contain family parties of from three or four to six or eight deer; and when such a party is imprisoned for the winter it has to subsist on the foliage of the trees. Apparently it does this without difficulty, for the inhabitants of a 'yard' are nearly always in good condition. Deer imprisoned in 'yards' have no more chance of escape or resistance than oxen in a slaughter-house, and the hunter finding them 'pots' the lot, old and young. I believe that the game-laws of Canada now forbid this wholesale slaughter; but at the time of which I am writing men did their own pleasure, and never failed to destroy a 'yard' to the last fawn.

It happened that my second experience of deer-shooting was at the destruction of a moose-yard. I soon learned to use snow-shoes with facility, and when the weather became favourable for journeying, Tom, Sam, and I, and two Indians from the hamlet, started on an expedition in search of game.

Deer-yards are never easy of discovery, because there are seldom any tracks leading up to them, and the pit is deep enough to completely hide the occupants. On this occasion our attention was attracted by a pack of lurking, snarling wolves, which was hovering round the yards in hope, I suppose, of a snap at one of the calves. There were seven moose confined between the snow walls: one old bull, one young bull, three cows, and two calves, the latter of a pretty good size.

The poor brutes seemed to foresee their impending fate, for they made desperate attempts to escape. But they were in a complete trap. The older animals were shot—for the moose is an ugly customer at close quarters—and the calves killed by cutting their throats.

For the flaying and cutting up of these animals help was required, for they probably produced more than two tons (over 4,000 lbs.) of meat. One of the Indians was therefore sent back to the village while we proceeded to make shelter huts, and camp in the yard, which was crimson with blood. Here there was soon a disgusting spectacle, my companions gorging themselves with flesh till they were literally unable to swallow more. But this was nothing to what occurred the next day, when our messenger returned with about sixty persons at his heels, nearly all squaws and children, with Chom and Emma amongst them (Andrew was away trapping near Grand Lake). These people were beside themselves with delight, for, their husbands and fathers being away in the woods shooting and trapping, they were on short commons, the late severe weather having made it difficult to find fish or small game. Here, however, was meat and to spare, though even the entrails were eagerly sought after as too valuable to be wasted. The wretched little urchins of the party were soon smothered in blood from head to foot, and not a few of them, and their mothers, ate pieces of the meat raw, too hungry, or impatient, to wait until fires could be lighted to cook it. Plenty of hand-sleighs had been brought, and the meat was soon all taken away. The women had helped to skin and cut it up; indeed, they did the greater part of the work, laughing, chatting, and rejoicing the meanwhile.

The skins were our property, and as much of the meat as they could drag away was given to Chom and her daughter. The rest was divided among the crowd of squaws, who in return undertook to drag the pelts back to our huts. All spent one night at the yard, which was fourteen or fifteen miles from the village, and many did not depart till the following day was well advanced, being too intent on feasting to hurry away. Altogether it was one of the most remarkable scenes of savage life which I had yet witnessed.

I have anticipated a little. For our people, seeing that many wolves had been attracted to this spot by the scent of the deer, laid traps all round the neighbourhood, with the result that in the three nights we remained here, nearly twenty wolves were

captured, besides four which I shot. The Indians might have shot many, but they prefer to trap them, as the mark of the bullet or shot depreciates the value of the skin—so they say.

The wolf-skins were distributed equally amongst us, but lots were drawn for the moose-pelts, as they were of various sizes and values. The method of drawing lots was that which I think is practised in all countries—viz., by holding a number of twigs of various lengths concealed in the hand, he who draws the longest having the first choice. This happened to fall to me; but as I had taken no part in the slaughter, I paid in powder and shot for my share, and in so doing I rose so much in the minds of these simple people that they raised me to the rank of a chief, and as such I was ever after treated by this tribe of Crees whilst I remained amongst them. It may be worth adding that at this time I dressed as an Indian, and have more than once been taken for one at the Hudson Company's posts. Others thought me a half-breed. Contrary to the rule in this country, where Europeans generally lose colour and become pale-faced, exposure to the weather turned my skin a deep red.

PAUL FOUNTAIN.

Camp-Ball.

EASTER SUNDAY had fallen late this year, and on the morning of a lovely April Bank Holiday I rowed my boat across the Broad to where old Sam Clare was loading his boat with reed that had been cut and stacked earlier in the season.

As my boat drifted alongside of his he looked up and greeted me with a 'Mornen', sir, it be a beautiful day, bain't it; a real weather-breeder, tew bright for th' time o' year?'

'You're busy, Sam,' I answered, laughing at the popular and generally true idea that a bright day in winter or spring is the harbinger of a spell of coarse weather.

'Yes,' he answered, 'I be gotten' a few shove o' reed boated home, but I ain't much gude at th' job now, I be gotten' inter years. What with th' barnen' nevralsy and th' flyen' liver I be wholly a makeshift, I be. Sarah, tew, she be wunnerful moderate about th' feet—and wunnerful crotchety in th' temper. That be summut o' th' cause o' my being out here at work; I can't set indoors when she dew her bit of a pug-out with th' linen; I allus try ter set myself a job Mondays when she be busy arter her washen'.'

Sam was a very small man and thin to a degree. His wizened, sharp-featured face bore a kindly expression—that is to say, if you got the better side of it; for one eye was lacking. 'That wur stubbed out by a reed,' he would explain, in answer to an unspoken query. He wore white nankeen breeches, long leather thigh-boots turned over at the knee, a brown velveteen jacket with brass buttons, and, at all seasons of the year, a seal-skin cap with ears.

Sam dearly loved a 'mardle,' as he termed a talk, and in his high, squeaky voice, which carried far, he would hold forth on all manner of subjects. What often failed him was a listener, so to-day, as I was in no hurry to leave the sunshine, and blue sky, and sparkling water, I pulled out my tobacco-pouch and offered it

to the old man. His one eye gleamed as he smelt the contents. Cramming in as much as his clay pipe could hold, he struck a match on his thole-pin, and with his toothless gums sucked hard at the pipe, till the blue smoke rose in a cloud about his head.

'Ah,' he exclaimed between the gasps and sucks, 'that be proper. Lor! bor, a blow o' bacca be a comfort when yer hot and tired, bain't it? I allus lights my pipe when I be dewing a hard stroke o' work; and that be a comfort, tew, when my old woman be amobben' on me. As sune as she start her chatter I lights my pipe and blows my hardest, that fare ter stop her quicker nor narthen, cos Sarah she be wunnerful weak in her tubes, and th' smoke allus start her off coughing, and a real proper fit o' coughing lasts her well nigh half an hour, and she never could dew tew things at once. So yer sees, master, I finds a pipe o' bacca wunnerful useful as well as comforting, I dew.'

Sam's eye was riveted on the big stone bottle that lay in the stern of my boat. I tried not to notice his glance, but called his attention to a hawk sweeping over the distant marsh. He looked up for a moment.

'Harrier,' he said in a tone of indifference. 'There be a pair on 'em breed about here most years,' and his eye returned to the bottle.

'Sam, I've got some stout in that bottle; do you care for a glass?' I was at last compelled to remark.

'Lor love a duck! that I should—a drop o' stout be proper; that be drink and wittles, that be. Well! come, here's another gude health,' as the old man raised the glass to his lips. 'Bless me! if this bain't summut like a Bank Holiday; bacca, and a drop o' black stuff, and th' sun ashinen' hot, and Sarah at home swillen' th' water out o' th' washtub, and amobben' cos I bain't nigh ter help her hang th' linen on th' line, an me out o' hearen' of it all. Lor! bor, I hain't had a bit o' luck like this here for many a Easter Bank Holiday, dang me, if I ha'. Still I ha' had gude times Easter Bank Holidays, I know I ha', Sam added, shutting his one eye; 'so I ha' Gude Fridays and all, years gone by.'

To me, as to Sam, time on this Bank Holiday had no particular value, so I got out of my boat and seated myself on the reed-stack by the old man's side.

'Why, what used you to do at Easter-time, years gone by?' I asked.

Sam was about to answer when across the Broad shrilled the well-known high-pitched voice:

'Sam, Sam, come yer home, yer owd warmen. Dew yer come and lend a hand awringen' out th' linen, and peg it on th' line.' As the first command elicited no response, the request was repeated in a still more peremptory tone.

'That's your old woman calling for you, Sam; don't stay for me,' I began.

'Stay for yer! dew yer think 'tis likely I be agoing?' His eye rested lovingly on the bottle. 'This be Bank Holiday; I be going ter keep it—leastways for a hour or tew. Don't yer pay no regard ter her; let her mob, she'll sune get tired; she can't shout long; hain't got th' breath she used ter have, thank Gawd! Lor bless us and save us! hark ter her, a mackerel-skinned owd warmen, there's a tongue for yer! Dew yer ask a neighbour ter lend yer a hand,' Sam screamed back in his squeaky voice. 'I ha' got some wery 'tickler business asellen' reed ter a builder chap,' he added without a blush. Distant mutterings echoed across the water, and then the cottage door was shut with a bang. Sam's countenance showed the thankfulness he felt. 'That's right,' he murmured, 'dew yer take that tongue o' yars indoors. Ah! bor, this is proper. Well, I wor atellen' on yer about th' Easter-times years gone by,' he went on, settling himself comfortably on the reed-stack.

'Yer knows, master, years gone by, we give over Easter-time ter camping. Camping,' he said, in answer to a question of mine, 'wor a game—kind o' football—only yer didn't kick th' ball, only each other. Yer ran with th' ball, and chucked it ter one o' yar side when yer couldn't keep one o' t'other side from getten' it away from yer. There wor tew kinds o' camping, or camp-ball, as some on 'em called it, savage camp and th' ordinary game, but that wor allus savage camp, leastways that allus finished up that way, about these parts, any way.

'I wor right a young 'un when th' last game wor played nigh here, for that ha' been put a stop tew fifty or more years ago. Th' game wor agin Blofield. We Ranner chaps allus played agin Blofield; we couldn't abide them Blofielders, nor they us Ranner chaps, and we allus had a set tew o' Gude Fridays. See that there pightle on top o' th' hill agin th' Jolly Maltsters, that be called Blood Hills ter this day. Ah! there ha' been some quantity o' blood let fly up there; a gude tidy lot o' mine ha' soaked inter that there ground.'

Sam turned and gazed at the little hill with fire in his eye, his old blood warming at the recollection of the triumphs of his

youth. 'Yes,' he went on, 'pretty nigh half Blofield used ter camp out in tents on that there hill. Leastways half th' men did and a lot o' th' women folk tew. They comed ter look on and ter help sponge th' blood off o' them that wor hurt. Lor love a duck ! them wor times and no mistake, and th' beer th' man as kept th' Maltsters drewed, barrels and barrels on it. Th' chaps could swill th' stuff inter 'em in them days a rum 'un. They didn't ask for half-pints, nor pints ; no, it wor a half-gallant or a gallant o' ale. I ha' knowed a chap wash hisself in beer both inside and out afore he started ter play, think o' that !'

The old man sighed so deeply, probably over the degeneracy of the present generation, that I felt bound to offer him another glass of stout. He brightened at once, and I asked him to describe how the game was played.

'Fust we used to pick sides ; sometimes there 'ud be fifteen a side, sometimes more. Then we stripped ourselves of coats and shirts, and had narthen on but our breeches and our butes ; afore th' game wor finished lots o' th' chaps hadn't narthen but their butes left, their breeches wor torn ter tatters, and both parishes alooken' on ! Perhaps that wor right as that wor done away with, that worn't wunnerful decent ; but in them days people could stomach more nor they can now. Well, arter we had stripped we put our clothes one a top of another inter heaps ter mark th' goals, and th' game wor ter carry th' ball inter yar own goal, t'other side tryen' ter take it from yer and carry it inter their own goal. Th' goals wor about ten yards wide, and it wor about tew hundred yards from one set o' goals ter t'other.

'I should ha' told yer as how th' proper game wor played with a small ball which wor coit up in th' air by someone not playing, and then th' tew sides rushed ter catch it and carry it home. Every time a chap carried th' ball inter his own goal that wor a snotch ter his side, and seven or nine snottes wor game. But with savage camp, or kicking camp, that wor a trifle different, for then we used a ball made of a bladder, covered with leather, and we kicked and hacked at that—or one another. Lor ! we did have some fun then ; that wor a master sport.'

Old Sam's eye again travelled up the hill and rested lovingly on the spot where, for 'fun,' his blood had been shed. 'Ah ! master,' he went on, 'savage camp took some playing ; I ha' knowed a game ter last all through Gude Friday, and th' Saturday, and Easter Sunday, and Bank Holiday, till we wor all so drunk or so wounded we couldn't go on no longer. We used

ter screw a bit o' horn on th' toes of our butes, so as we could play off old scores th' better. Lor! bor, yer could give a chap a nasty rap in th' shins with horn on yer toes. Many a man got his leg broke. Dew yer come inter mine one evening when I ha' got my butes off; I'll show yer some scars on my legs. I ha' got some funny owd wales which show up purple even now, though they be more nor fifty year old.

'Yes, all owd scores wor' saved up for Gude Friday. If yer owed a chap one yer paid it then; or if in th' year yer hadn't time ter stop ter punch a chap's head as had been argifyng with yer, or given' yer a bit o' lip, or a drop o' sauce, yer just said: "All right, dang yer, I'll mark yer when camping time come round."

'Why, 'twor just afore th' last game as ever I played in—th' last game as ever wor played on Blood Hills—that I took up along o' Sarah. I wor right a soft fule over Sarah in them days; hot-blooded 'un I wor, though a little 'un, as yer sees. I wor going it all right and proper along o' she when a great chap called Liver-Lip, as live at Blofield, took a fancy to her tew, and he meant having her, he did. It wor kind o' might is right in them days; that didn't sinnify much what th' gal thought or wanted, th' strongest had her. Well! he and me fell out over Sarah. That wor but a week ter Easter time, so we kinder agreed to let matters lay over ter th' Gude Friday, when play wor ter begin.

'Sarah, lor, sir! yer wouldn't think it, but Sarah she wor a beauty, th' pride o' Ranner, in them days. She wor as beautiful as a angel in th' heavens; but there, what's in faces, I says. We all grows old and ugly, some more nor t'others, and Sarah in pertickler. Blast me! but she wor a pretty young mawther,' and the old man emphasised his words by smiting violently on the nankeen breeches. He went on with a sigh: 'A young man be wholly a fule when he ha' got th' young blood in him, and I wor just mad arter Sarah.'

Sam paused again, whether from emotion or dryness of the throat I cannot say. Mechanically I filled his glass, and as he raised it to his lips the sun fell full on his old grey beard, and I saw in his eye a far-away look, showing that the mind had wandered back to days when Sarah was different from the little, sharp-tongued, hard-featured woman who, in the distance, could be seen pegging clothes on to a line in the back garden.

Sam strode up and down in front of his litter-stack, crushing the young wild mint beneath his feet, the perfumed air adding

one more joy to the pleasures of the day. He was living his early days over again, for presently he turned and exclaimed :

'Ah! she wor beautiful, by Gawd, she wor. Small, sartenly, but one o' th' prettiest little mawthers in th' parish, or ten parishes round. I loved th' ground she trod on; I loved th' sun cos it shined upon her; I loved the water, cos that showed her image as in a looking-mirror. There wor narthen I wouldn't ha' done ter sarve her. I'd ha' gone through fire and water had she bade me. I'd ha'——'

'Have another glass, Sam?' I interjected.

'Thank yer, I will. Proper stuff that be, wittles *and* drink. Lor love a duck! that be gude; I be enjoyen' o' my old frame.'

'And Liver-Lip?' said I, to recall him to his tale.

'Liver-Lip! Ah! well, it wor like this. I remembers it as if it wor only last Tuesday, and so does Sarah. As I said afore, we fell out over th' gal. That come about this ways. I wor out walken' and courten' along o' Sarah one Sunday arternune. I worn't exactly a proper lovier, still folks had begun to put out the bell about I and she, and I thought things wor going all right and proper-like, and I wor as pleased as Punch, and right a toff, with a posy in my buttonhole. We had got nigh agin Parnser Church, and I wor persuading Sarah ter let me put my arm round her waist, and she wor given' little shrieks and playen' about, when out of a loke came this here Liver-Lip, as he wor called. He tarned his eyes onter Sarah, and she flared up red in th' face and stopped skrumaging about along o' me. He up and says :

"Well! there's a bonnika little mawther, ter be sure. Don't yer want a man ter walk along with, Miss?" I stretched myself to my full height. "Cos I see yer hain't got one," he says, throwing a look at me.

'My gorge rose, and I up and said: "And what may I be, pray?"'

'He laughed and winked at my gal and said: "Lor! I didn't pay no regard ter th' likes o' him. I thought that wor a monkey."

'That wor cos I wor so small. I give him a bit o' lip then, and imitated as how I wor going ter go for him and clip him alongside th' lug, but Sarah she got hold o' my arm, and then she laughed and said :

"If yer calls th' little chap I be walken' with them there names, I shan't ask yer ter join us."

"All right," says he, "I 'on't take no notice o' th' likes o' he. I never even seed him till he began ter blare," and he kind o' looked over my head in a riley-like way. "I 'on't hurt th' poor little chap," he went on, "but I'll walk along with yer, as yer ha' been so kind as ter ask me."

'Afore I could look round he had put his arm through Sarah's, and he nodded his head at me, and said: "Come on, little Hop o' my Thumb, yer'd best hurry up if yer going ter keep along o' us, but don't bust yarself adoing on it. If yer dew tew much them little legs o' yars 'll get the cramp."

'Sarah, she passed that off with a laugh and made as though that wor a bit o' fun. I didn't though. I looked something black at him; I wor kind o' taken' of his measure all th' time. I worn't going ter ha' th' dirty kick-out, so I stuck along of them, but that worn't wery pleasant talk I heerd, I can tell yer. All th' time he kept apraisen' on her up and a tellen' her what a beauty she wor and sich-like silly nonsense. He fared ter me ter ha wunnerful little know, but that fared ter tickle Sarah's fancy; gals be such fules when they gets hold of a chap as can keep clicketten' on o' soft talk. I could stomach it no longer, so I stood myself full in Liver-Lip's path, and I says:

"Wery well, Mr. Liver-Lip, next week be camping week. I 'on't forget yer."

'He says: "Why, they don't let little things like yer play, dew they? Yer'll get trampled on."

'Then Sarah up and said her say: "Dew yer just wait," she say; "'Sam'll show yer something. He be a proper player and he'll be sorely pleased ter meet yer."

"That be all right," he say, "yer makes a lot o' tutter about it; I'll bring my spectacles along o' me, so as I shan't miss seeing on yer."

'With that he slings his hook, and Sarah and I go home ter-gether. I give her a bit o' my mind on th' way back, I can tell yer, master, so we didn't part so wunnerful pleasant.

'Lor! I did long for Gude Friday ter come. All th' week I kept thinken' of a hundred ways how I could punish Liver-Lip. I worn't afear'd of him, not one bit, though he wor a great hulking chap, tree times my size. Half Blofield were housed in tents on Blood Hills that Gude Friday. When they picked up for Ranner I wor chosen. Liver-Lip, he wor allus in th' Blofield team cos he wor so powerful a chap. It had been a wet night the night afore, and th' grass wor right slippy. I seed at once that 'ud be in our

favour, cos Blofield had picked all heavy men, and they can't tarn and twist on slippery grass like light ones can. Th' captains o' th' tew sides comed for'ard and they say: "Who wotes for savage camp?"

"Sam Clare dew," I cried, and all th' field heerd me; I'd more woice in them days than I have now. Lor! how th' folk did laugh. I heerd th' Walsham butcher call me a little cock sparrer. I didn't care, I'd got my bit o' horn tucked up my sleeve all ready for my friend Liver-Lip.

'Th' Blofielders wor a right upstaren' lot o' chaps, and we had several owd scores ter set off agin them, so all Ranner woted for savage camp and Blofield didn't gainsay us. We knowed that 'ud be a gude game, and so that wor; one o' our side got his leg broke, and tew o' theirs wor layen' on th' ground as if they wor dade. We had got four snotches agin their tew. Liver-Lip and I hadn't had much opportunity o' gotten' at one another, but as th' fourth snotch wor made I ran up ter him and shouted:

"Fare ter me; th' monkey be as clarver as th' great awk'ard bull," and afore he knew what I wor arter I'd ripped up his trouser and driven my horn into his skin, cruel.

"Dew yer wait, young jackanapes," he hollaed, but I hooked it pretty quick, as yer can guess. "I'll be even with yer," he shouts, and he started ter follow me across th' ground, but I wor a deal fleeter nor he and he couldn't come nigh me. Lor! bor, I wor proud ter ha' drawn fust blood!

'Presently I managed ter get th' ball, and I wor going nicely inter our goal with it when Liver-Lip come chargen' down upon me. He caught me a rum 'un between th' eyes which nigh onsensed me, and down I go like a bit o' lead in water. Then he jumped upon my chest and I heerd something go crack; that wor tew o' my ribs. He went off with th' ball and made a snotch for his side, and then they stopped for beer, and all th' folk come crowden' round me and said:

"What, Sam, bor, be yer knocked out o' time?"

'Sarah came runnen' up all of a tremble, cos she thought I wor dade. I laid with my eyes shut, I did, and she took on something fearful. Liver-Lip laughed ter see me lying there, and he say: "Why, Sally, gal, yar little Hop o' my Thumb never wor much ter look at, but he be a sorry sight now. Fare ter me, yer 'on't think much sakes o' his face now."

'Then Sarah upped and spoke. That be th' only time o' my life as I ha' been pleased ter hear her give a bit o' lip.

"Get out yer great hulken' ugly brute," she say. "If this poor chap be killed yer be a murderer; don't yer ever imitate ter speak ter me agin. I likes th' look o' him a deal sight better than I did th' ugly look I seed on yar face when yer jumped on him, I dew, yer coward. Dew yer go home, yer warmen, yer low-down blackguard, yer bully." She spat them words out like an angry cat, I can tell yer.

'Then she plumped down on her knees alongside o' me and took my head on her lap, and I felt a hot tear splash on my face. I gave a groan then, for that pleased me ter feel Sarah wor ashedden' tears over me, and she said: "Thank Gawd! yer bain't dead, Sam," and arter that th' tears comed down like a hailstorm in June.

'Someone comed and carried me off the field, and as sune as I wor about agin Sarah and I fixed it up, and we wor wed th' following Whit Monday. Lor! that wor honey then, we wor kind o' mollified with love.'

Sam took another pinch of tobacco, and with shaking fingers crammed it in the bowl of his clay pipe. He lighted it, and a smile passed across his face at the memories of his long gone youth. 'Ah!' he repeated under his breath, 'she wor a beauty, th' pride o' th' willage, and Liver-Lip wor tree times as big as me.'

The cottage door was flung open and the old lady's voice sounded across the Broad. 'Sam, yer owd warmen, be yer acomen' home ter ha' yar wittles? Whatever be th' use o' me maken' beautiful dumplen's if yer be going ter stop out on th' mesh all day? Sam, dew yer hear? If yer don't come home I'll hull 'em in th' Broad, that's a sure moral, and yar belly can go empty.'

'I be acomen', Sarah, hold yer on. Gude day ter yer, master.' Sam tumbled into his boat, and as he drew the oars into the water I heard him mutter: 'Don't know as how I shouldn't ha' sarved Liver-Lip out a deal more if I'd ha' let him ha' her, arter all.'

CHAS. FIELDING MARSH.

Love's Trance.

LOVE came shyly through a glade
 Trellis-worked with summer's shade;
 Fear, the zephyr's perfume tainting,
 Breathed on Love and left him fainting.

Love with drooping pinions lay
 Helpless through the weary day,
 Fell at eventide to weeping—
 Wept himself to death-like sleeping.

Scorn and Envy passing said,
 'Love is moonstruck, Love is dead!'
 Hope flew there when morn was breaking,
 Kist Love back to joy of waking.

WALTER HERRIES POLLOCK.

*Nature's Comedian.*¹

BY W. E. NORRIS.

CHAPTER I.

HAROLD DUNVILLE AT HOME.

‘**A**S certain men are called Nature’s gentlemen, so Mr. Harold Dunville may be said to be one of Nature’s comedians. His very clever and convincing impersonations always strike us as being the result rather of a rare personal gift than of study or schooling; it is as yet impossible to pronounce him a great actor, and equally impossible, of course, to deny that he has become a most successful one. The suggestion may be hazarded that his success is precisely due to the fact that, despite his admirable enunciation and perfect management of hands and features, he is so little of an actor, so visibly unprofessional. It is also possible—in view of the parts to which he has invariably, and no doubt wisely, limited himself—that he has benefited through being, not one of “Nature’s gentlemen,” but by birth and education a gentleman in the more restricted sense of that term.’

‘Now, I call that beastly impertinent, you know,’ said Mr. Harold Dunville, tossing the paper across the table to the lean, clean-shaven, shrewd-looking man who was sharing his breakfast.

‘Well,’ returned the latter, after glancing through the critical notice of which the above formed the opening paragraph, ‘I don’t see much to complain of in this. It’s easy to guess who wrote it, and he evidently means to be complimentary. Only he had to justify his reputation by accounting for you somehow or other, and——’

‘And he does it by announcing that I am a gentleman—which is none of his business—and insinuating that I am an amateur.’

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'Oh, that won't hurt you; that won't diminish our receipts, you may depend upon it.'

'Perhaps not; but it's a piece of impertinence, all the same.'

'You have no particular reason to say so. I can tell you who *will* think they have reason to say so, and that is all the other actors in London, whom he has incidentally informed that they are not gentlemen. I am sorry for him, poor man, but he has brought it upon himself. He shouldn't have tried to account for you in that way. It would have been so easy to explain your triumphs in ways which would have been less offensive to others, though they might have been equally so to you.'

Harold Dunville laughed. 'Oh, I know what you mean,' said he; 'you allude to my good looks, of which I am perfectly conscious and not in the least vain. They are a part of my stock-in-trade; I exhibit them every night upon the stage, and by doing so I give critics the right to comment upon them. If anybody likes to assert that crowds have been attracted to the St. Martin's Theatre for the last three months by my handsome face, he may; I differ from him, but he is entitled to his opinion. My parentage is another matter. I haven't paraded that, and I can't admit that it concerns either the critics or the public.'

He was oddly sensitive upon that point. Oddly, at least, to those who were unacquainted with a history which he desired to ignore, and which had left him upon somewhat cold terms with his relatives. It was not, after all, such a very discreditable history, and the follies of youth, which had entailed the loss of his entire patrimony, might have been condoned, had not his widowed mother's straitened circumstances forbidden her to rescue him from the Bankruptcy Court. But bankruptcy, of course, meant compulsory retirement from the army, and when (in the absolute necessity of earning bread-and-butter by some means or other) he adopted the stage as a profession, the Dunvilles, one and all, declined to have anything further to do with him. Now that, after a good many years of hand-to-mouth existence, he found himself on a sudden famous and prosperous, he not unnaturally resented the assertion that he was indebted to anything save his own talents. For he was vain of his talents if, as he quite truly alleged, he did not pride himself much upon his comeliness.

'And you know, Shepherd,' he went on presently, 'I don't propose to limit myself for ever to the drawing-room parts which, according to this fellow, exhaust my capabilities.'

'Yes, I know,' drily replied Mr. Shepherd, who was Harold Dunville's secretary, agent, and manager, and who may, indeed, be said to have discovered, as well as established, that public favourite.

'You say that as if you meant to go on being obstinate,' Dunville remarked rather fretfully.

The other shrugged his shoulders, laughing a little. 'Oh, yes; I am afraid I must go on being obstinate. No Shakespeare at the St. Martin's, please, if that is what you have got in your head.'

'But why not? If other people produce him, and do so successfully, why shouldn't I?'

'Well, they are not always successful; they tumble down pretty badly, some of them. But they can afford to fail occasionally, whereas you can't as yet. Not in any sense. What we have to do is to stick to what we know will pay. One of these fine days, when you are rich enough and sure enough of your position to try experiments, you may, if you choose, attempt parts for which you don't possess the requisite qualifications.'

'What do you call the requisite qualifications? And how can you tell whether I possess them or not?'

Shepherd, seeing the fire of rising anger in his interrogator's large brown eyes, hastened to apologise.

'Well, well! I beg your pardon. Of course I can't tell for certain that you don't possess qualifications which are rather uncommon; you might, for anything I know, give us an entirely new and original rendering of Hamlet or Macbeth. Indeed, I should quite think that you would. Only, if you will believe me, the time for that sort of thing hasn't come yet. The present piece, I take it, is good for another three months' run, and had better be resumed in the autumn. There won't be any difficulty about renewing our lease of the St. Martin's until Christmas; for Moore, who is doing very well in America, is in no hurry to return. After Christmas I don't know; possibly you may by that time be in a position to start a theatre of your own.'

Harold Dunville's eyes sparkled and his good humour returned; for it was his ambition to own a theatre (only within the last twelvemonth had he arrived at the dignity of being a lessee), and he had an unbounded confidence in Shepherd which was not misplaced.

'How do we stand?' he asked, putting a question which anybody else would have put before.

'Very well indeed, according to my notions,' answered Shepherd complacently. 'Of course, now that the season is drawing towards an end and the weather has become so hot, we must expect diminished receipts; but, making allowance for that, I think that when we close, a few weeks hence, and have paid all expenses, there should be a matter of 8,000*l.* for you in the bank.'

'My word!—eight thousand! Shepherd, you're as good as a gold mine, and I feel like a millionaire!'

'I most sincerely hope that you won't be so insane as to feel or behave like that. I hope you will have the common sense to invest two-thirds of this money in first-class securities at once and to remember that you have embarked upon the most precarious of all trades. It is not in the least difficult, I assure you, to lose as much as you have made. The present piece has gone well; but the next production may fall flat. Nobody ever knows.'

'My dear Shepherd, I am persuaded that nothing in which you are concerned will fall flat.'

'Thank you; but it is indispensable, all the same, that you should make some provision for a rainy day. Here you are in a flat in Ashley Gardens, and you keep three servants. That doesn't sound wildly extravagant, I grant you; yet when the incidental expenses of entertainments, trips to Brighton and so forth are counted in, it implies a certain yearly outlay. Do you know at all at what rate per annum you are living?'

'Haven't the most distant idea.'

'I thought not; but I have an idea. I should say that, what with one thing and another, you are spending from 1,500*l.* to 2,000*l.* a year. Now, do you know what amount of capital is required to produce 1,500*l.* a year in these days of low interest?'

'Indeed I don't, and what's more I don't care. I am not at all likely to starve now, and I really don't aspire to living upon my invested savings, like a retired tradesman.'

'You will have to retire eventually,' Shepherd began; but his homily was cut short by the entrance of Dunville's servant, who announced, in the indiscreetly discreet undertone which servants are apt to employ on such occasions, that Miss Fitzwalter was at the door, begging for a short interview.

Harold shot a deprecating glance across the table at his companion, whose brows were slightly raised. 'Something about the play, I suppose,' he remarked; and then, turning to the servant, 'Ask her to come in.'

As soon as the man had left the room he added hurriedly,

'See me through, like a good chap. She is sure to give you a hint to go; but don't take it.'

'Oh, I won't take it,' answered Shepherd, with a quiet smile.

Presently there sailed in a very tall, somewhat angular lady, whose fine eyes, abundant dark hair, and fairly regular features had won for her the fame of being one of the handsomest actresses on the London stage. On the stage she was unquestionably handsome; off it, and in the strong light of a summer morning, she was obviously on the wrong side of thirty, and even some distance on that wrong side. This was Miss Lorna Fitzwalter (her real name was Laura Walters, but that is neither here nor there), and she ranked second only to Mr. Harold Dunville himself in a company which was, by universal admission, an exceptionally strong one.

'Oh, I didn't know you were here, Mr. Shepherd,' said she in a tone which suggested that the surprise was not an agreeable one.

'I can only hope, Miss Fitzwalter,' answered that gentleman politely, 'that my being here may prove of service to you. You have come, of course, about some matter connected with your part.'

'Yes; there really must be an alteration in the supper scene. I can't drink three glasses of champagne straight off. For one thing, it disagrees with me; and for another, it shocks the audience. I have seen quite plainly for some time past that it shocked the audience.'

Shepherd nodded gravely. 'That shall be changed,' he promised. 'It isn't in any way essential to the action for you to drink more than one glass. I will see to it before this evening's performance.'

He did not add any expression of regret that Miss Fitzwalter should during three whole months have uncomplainingly done violence to her health and her sense of decorum; for he made it a rule to keep upon the best of terms with the rather umbrageous artists whom it was his function to drive or coax.

She looked impatiently at him. 'Will you see to it at once?' she asked.

'Without loss of time,' replied Shepherd, and showed no inclination to rise.

Miss Fitzwalter sat down abruptly, turning her shoulder towards him, and began to talk to Harold Dunville in a nervous, jerky style. It was evident that she was talking for the sake of

talking, and did not know very well what she was talking about. It might also be surmised that she had something to say which could not be said in the presence of a third person. But by degrees she grew calm; the lines upon her forehead and about the corners of her mouth disappeared; once or twice she smiled with the happy air of one whose anxieties have been at least partially relieved.

It was in achievements of this kind that Harold Dunville excelled, and Shepherd, keenly watching him, said to himself that it was not only as good as a play, but far better than most plays. It was not surprising that any woman should be fascinated by the young fellow (for he was still young, and at times looked almost boyish), with his short, curly hair, his perfectly-shaped nose and mouth, and those wonderful brown eyes of his, which were as expressive as a dog's. 'But it's his voice that does the trick,' Shepherd mused. He had several voices, all of them pleasant to the ear; but there was one which, as Shepherd had had previous occasion to notice, he reserved for purposes of intercourse with the opposite sex. Women were never able to resist those caressing accents, which said so much more than the mere articulate words of which they were the vehicle. Miss Fitzwalter could not resist them, and if she gathered that Harold was as much annoyed as she was by the company of his factotum, but that there was no help for it, nor anything to be done but to await a more favourable opportunity, that was exactly what she was meant to gather. She rose at length, holding out her hand and saying:

'We shall meet this evening at the theatre—and afterwards?'

'I quite hope so,' answered her host. Then, observing that her smile faded, while her eyebrows drew together, he added quickly, 'Oh, yes, I'll make a point of it—I'll make a point of it!'

'I don't wish to be inquisitive or impertinent,' said Shepherd, after Harold had returned from showing the visitor out, 'but may I ask whether Miss Fitzwalter is in the habit of calling upon you at your private residence?'

'Well, I begged you to sit her out, didn't I?' returned Harold, laughing. 'Yes, she has been here once or twice. Suggestions or complaints about the piece, you know.'

'Such as her inability to drink more than one glass of champagne without feeling ill, eh? It is only upon the stage that she suffers in that way, I imagine.'

'Oh, come, Shepherd!'

'I make no insinuations; I mean nothing more than what I say. Only, with your permission, Dunville, I should like to say quite plainly what I mean; which is that you will get yourself into a horrid mess one of these days if you are not more careful. Miss Fitzwalter is a decentish sort of woman, but she is excitable, she is even more foolish than the women of her class generally are, she is by no means in her first youth, and—she is obviously liable to be hypnotised by you. I should have thought that it would be simple enough to refrain from hypnotising her.'

The thing was not quite so simple as that. On the contrary, it was just upon the process which Shepherd described as hypnotism that Harold relied to preserve him from worse dangers. But, as this could not be explained, he only laughed again and answered:

'My dear man, it's all right. I am not such a fool as you take me for, and there really isn't the least risk of my being sued for breach of promise.'

There was, nevertheless, an appreciable risk of his being overtaken by that calamity; for if he had not actually asked Lorna Fitzwalter to marry him, he had gone so near it that she unquestionably regarded him as her property. Her fits of jealousy, mitigated by hypnotism, had been disagreeably frequent of late, and might have embittered his life, had he not been blessed with the happy faculty of dismissing one set of circumstances from his mind the moment that he began to occupy himself with another. He thought about Lorna for some minutes after he had taken leave of Shepherd, had gone out and was walking briskly in the direction of the Park. He thought about the history of his relations with her, which was not known to his mentor, of her extraordinary kindness to him in the hard days when he had often but a few shillings in his pocket, of her devotion and encouragement and unfaltering belief in his future. She was, of course, rather vulgar, apt to be rather noisily hilarious when she was enjoying herself, and, as Shepherd had said, she was excitable and foolish. He need not have called her 'decentish,' though; she was absolutely decent, and had, it was said, always been so. Nobody was more universally respected in the profession. As for himself, he had certainly been very fond of her, and was still fond of her; but had he ever thought of marrying her? He really could not remember; but he was quite sure that he did not want to marry her now.

'If it comes to that,' he muttered, 'I'll be hanged if I want to marry anybody! I should loathe being married. Good Lord! think of the perpetual trouble that there would be with the others!'

The others were extraordinarily numerous; he often, and quite honestly, wished that they were less so, though he hardly saw how he was to reduce their numbers. They wrote to him in the warmest terms, many of them without waiting for the formality of introduction; they waylaid him in public and in private; they were of all ages and classes. He had ceased to be flattered by such tributes to physical charms of which, as he had truly assured Shepherd, he was not vain, and his female admirers, upon the whole, bored him a good deal; yet he could not help treating them as though he loved them. It was a method which had its disadvantages; but it was at least preferable to that of quarrelling with them, he thought. He had, for instance, to lunch that day in Park Lane with a certain great lady who had taken him up violently and who might have done him some injury in his profession, had he offended her by declining her constant invitations. She was a silly woman, sprightly and flighty in a style which accorded ill with her years, and her luncheon parties were far too large and too long to be enjoyable; but her importance and influence were not to be ignored. So he went, and if he was wishing himself anywhere else all the time, nobody would have guessed it from his manner. The smart ladies whom he met were enchanted with him; even the gilded youths whom he outshone had to admit that he was not a bad sort; the only offence that he gave was by pleading urgent business at the theatre as an excuse for departing before the other guests had left, which was perhaps not what his hostess had meant him to do.

He really had one or two matters to attend to at the theatre, and he betook himself thither forthwith in a hansom, drawing long breaths of relief while he was being borne smoothly through the sunny streets. For the theatre, at any rate, interested him, and smart society, as such, did not. On reaching his destination, he found, as was usually the case, a little pile of letters and telegrams awaiting him, and these he quickly examined. Not one of them arrested his attention for more than a moment until he came to the last of the telegrams, which brought him unexpected and even rather startling intelligence.

'Our dear mother died suddenly this morning. Pray come to us at once, if possible. Dick.'

Harold Dunville stood for some minutes, holding the slip of

paper in one hand, while with the other he pensively pinched his chin.

Then he sighed heavily and made his way up dark and tortuous stairs to the little room which was appropriated to his secretary's use. Shepherd looked up from a mass of correspondence, as he entered, and, taking note of his grave face, asked :

'Anything wrong?'

'I have had rather a knock,' Harold answered quietly ; 'I have just heard that my mother is dead.'

Shepherd stared. He did not know very much about his friend's domestic affairs ; but he did happen to know that Mrs. Dunville had treated him with the utmost severity—had, in fact, refused to hold any intercourse, direct or indirect, with him, and had not even troubled herself to ascertain whether he was in want or not. That she had at one time had reasons for thinking ill of her son was likely enough ; but she had nevertheless, in Shepherd's opinion, shown herself a most unnatural mother, and it was difficult to imagine that her decease could be a source of any profound grief to one whom she had so pitilessly disowned. Yet the man was genuinely grieved ; nobody could look at his face and doubt that. Shepherd, who knew very well—or thought he knew—what were the weaknesses of the friend who was at once his employer and his *protégé*, knew also—or thought he knew—that Harold had a good heart, and this theory of his now received touching confirmation.

'My dear fellow,' said he kindly, 'I am very sorry. Of course you won't play to-night.'

'Oh, I can't ; I must go down to my brother, who has telegraphed for me. My mother has lived with him of late years, and she died in his house.'

'I see. Well, don't worry about the piece ; Sandford is very well up in your part, and audiences are always sympathising in cases of bereavement. You won't wish to appear again for some little time, I suppose?'

'Not for another ten days or a fortnight, I should think. To tell you the truth, the period of my absence will depend a little upon how I am received by my brother and my sister ; but I imagine that, whether they wish me to stay with them or not, they would hardly consider it decent for me to resume my public appearances at once. Personally, I have no feeling of that kind about it ; one's private sorrows have so little to do with the antics by which one makes a living.'

He spoke somewhat bitterly and looked somewhat forlorn. It was easy to guess that this very popular and prosperous fellow had moments of despondency, moments of yearning for that family affection which nothing can replace. Shepherd, who was not, as a rule, demonstrative, got up and patted him on the shoulder.

'Your brother and your sister will be very glad to see you and to keep you with them,' said he, 'they would be a couple of brutes if they weren't. Now you had better go and pack; I must see about getting notices printed for this evening's play-bills.'

CHAPTER II.

THE RETURN OF THE PRODIGAL.

DUNVILLE MANOR stands on a hillside, with its back against the Weald of Kent, looking down superbly upon a wide expanse of arable land, orchards, and hop-gardens, nearly all of which were, less than a hundred years ago, the property of the good old family whence it derives its name. But certain successive members of that family having been quite the reverse of good in an economical sense, the ancestral acres shrank by degrees until nothing of them remained but a park and a small home farm—a state of things which rendered it somewhat difficult for the Reverend Richard Dunville, when he succeeded, to find a tenant for so large a house. However, he had the good luck, after a time, to secure one in the person of Sir Joseph Gardiner, a retired ironmaster, who did not, fortunately, insist upon shooting and who was fascinated—or perhaps the ladies of his household were—by the beautiful Jacobean building, with its spacious reception rooms, its broad terraces and its charming walled garden.

As for the Reverend Richard, who could by no means afford to be a squarson, he continued to live, as he had done for some years previous to his father's death, in the neighbouring Rectory, his mother and his sister joining him and adding their small means to his. Until the Manor was let they were very poor indeed, for the last of the Dunville squires had crippled himself by extravagance in his youth, and he left behind him liabilities which Richard insisted absolutely upon discharging. Moreover, at that very untimely juncture came Harold's fiasco, which had to be

dealt with. This, as has already been mentioned, could not be adequately dealt with, and bankruptcy ensued ; yet sundry claims, not capable of being enforced by legal process, were honourably met ; for a long time after which the Rector of the parish drank no wine and kept no horses ; though he was fond of riding and liked a glass of port after dinner in the winter very much. But these hard times came to an end for him when he got the white elephant of his inheritance off his hands, and although he was even then rather badly off, he was able once more to allow himself the luxury of a saddle-horse. Nobody who knew Mrs. Dunville expected him to indulge in the luxury of matrimony ; nobody would have had the courage to attempt living in the house with that terrible old woman, nor indeed would Richard himself have dreamt of suggesting such a thing.

At the time of his mother's sudden death, which was a genuine shock and grief to him, he was in his thirty-eighth year, a stalwart, broad-shouldered man, with a large, pleasant, sunburnt face, clear blue eyes and dark hair, which was already beginning to turn grey at the temples. He was very popular in the parish, as indeed he deserved to be, for he had always done what parochial work there was to do with a will, he was an enthusiastic cricketer, and, as far as his means and profession allowed him to be so, an ardent sportsman. He could not boast of his younger brother's good looks ; but he had the sort of comeliness which belongs to excellent health combined with amiability, and, as his sister Anne, herself a very homely person, sometimes remarked, one undernably first-class beauty is enough in any family. She was sitting with him in his little darkened study at the Rectory shortly after he had despatched the telegram alluded to in the last chapter, and she was talking about its recipient, whom she had not seen for a good many years.

'I should think he would come,' she remarked musingly.

'Oh, he is quite certain to come!'

'Well, yes, I suppose he is. It will be odd to have him in these parts again.'

'It will be a great joy to me,' the Rector declared, with a hint of reproach in his voice. 'What grieves me is that our dear mother and he can never be reconciled now in this world.'

'They never would have been if she had lived to be a hundred. Her view, you know, was that he had brought eternal disgrace upon himself and upon us all by becoming a professional actor.'

It isn't very easy to pardon people who have eternally disgraced themselves and their relations.'

'But her view—if I may say so without disrespect—was a totally mistaken one. I can't help blaming myself for having failed to convince her that it was mistaken.'

Anne smiled. She had a queer, dry smile, the effect of which was to lower the corners of her mouth, instead of elevating them. Anne was forty years of age and looked more. Dark in colouring, like all the Dunvilles, she had a swarthier complexion than either of her brothers; she had always been plain and for years past had not made the slightest effort to render herself less so.

'You did try, didn't you, Dick?' she asked.

'Oh, yes,' answered the Rector, with a sigh, 'I did try—once.'

Then he caught his sister's eye and they both laughed a little. It was in truth not very likely that anybody would have attempted a second time to convince the late Mrs. Dunville of error. But Dick, remembering how inappropriate laughter was at such a time, made haste to compose his countenance.

'You—you'll be good to him, won't you, Anne?' he resumed presently in hesitating, persuasive accents.

'Bless your life, yes!' returned Anne briskly; 'did you think I was going to take this opportunity of insulting him? I haven't any prejudice against actors; I haven't even any particular prejudice against Harold, who was always a plausible sort of fellow, and who may be a reformed character. There was room for reform; let us hope that it has taken place. But you know more about him in these days than I do.'

Dick shook his head. 'I don't know much about him. I looked him up in London on one occasion, and he welcomed me very kindly; but I didn't repeat the visit, because I felt that it would be hardly loyal to mother. Then, a month or two ago, I went to the St. Martin's Theatre and saw him in this new piece which has made such a sensation.' The Rector paused for a moment and then spread out his hands, his face lighting up with enthusiasm. 'Simply superb!' he ejaculated—'simply superb!'

'The play, do you mean?'

'No; the play was only pretty good; I mean Harold. In all my life I have never seen anything so perfectly easy and apparently unstudied, yet so perfectly right. There wasn't a gesture or a tone amiss from start to finish; he seemed to have absolutely converted himself into the man whom he represented.'

Anne nodded. 'Ah,' she observed slowly and meditatively, 'I shouldn't wonder.'

'Anne, you *are* prejudiced against him!'

'I can't think why you should say so.'

'Because of your manner. I suspect you of keeping something back.'

'Is it my habit to keep things back? Do I, for instance, go up to London upon the plea of having to attend an S.P.G. meeting and then lark off to the play surreptitiously?'

'Oh, well, I couldn't tell dear mother about that, you know.'

'No, I agree that you couldn't. You might have told me, though.'

'At the time I thought that it would perhaps be rather more prudent not to mention it even to you, Anne,' the Rector frankly owned; 'but to return to what we were speaking of——'

'I must leave you now, Dick,' interrupted Miss Dunville, who was not anxious to revert to that topic; 'I ought to be seeing to various things, the making ready of Harold's room amongst others. I presume he will come down by the seven-thirty?'

'I should think he would. Anyhow, I'll be at the station with the pony-trap upon the chance.'

Harold did arrive by the 7.30, and the meeting between the two brothers was an affectionate one. What particularly touched the elder was his junior's simple, unaffected sorrow over their common loss; for, indeed, Harold might well have been pardoned had he adopted a less filial tone.

'Of course,' said Dick, while they were driving away together, 'I can't help regretting that it is now too late for old differences to be made up, and I can't help wishing that I had done a little more than I did to bring about a reconciliation. But—you know what our dear mother was.'

'Quite well,' answered Harold, with a slight smile, 'and I know that she had every right to treat me as incorrigible. One must accept the consequences of having behaved like a supreme ass and spent more money than one possessed.'

'I don't think it was so much that as her antiquated horror of the stage. She maintained that no actor could be a gentleman, nor any gentleman an actor. Then, too, I think that our reduced circumstances tended to narrow and embitter her; she never quite forgave me for letting the Manor, though she knew how impossible it was for me to live there.'

'Well,' observed Harold tolerantly, 'all that is over and done

with. We must try to forget recent years and only remember that she was a good mother to us when we were boys. This seems to have been very sudden. Had she been ailing for long?’

‘Not for an hour, that we knew of. She went to bed apparently in her usual health, and this morning she was found dead in her chair. The doctor, it seems, was aware that her heart was weak, but he did not suspect the existence of any organic disease. He thinks that her death was probably painless.’

Harold nodded and sighed. “‘To cease upon the midnight with no pain,’” he murmured; ‘what better fortune can be desired for ourselves or for others? One doesn’t particularly fear death; but one is a little bit afraid of the slow, gruesome process of dying.’

Dick opened his lips, as if to demur to these sentiments; for he held orthodox opinions and prayed quite sincerely on Sundays, Wednesdays, and Fridays to be preserved from battle, murder, and sudden death; but, remembering that his brother’s opinions were in all probability the reverse of orthodox, he held his peace. It rejoiced and comforted his honest heart to think that, be his brother’s religious opinions what they might, nobody could have behaved in the circumstances with more perfect good taste and good feeling.

Harold did not say much when they arrived at the Rectory, and when he was conducted into the bedroom where Mrs. Dunville’s body lay; he did not say much after he had taken his last look at those stern features, serene in death, which he had not seen for many years; but he was visibly moved, visibly—perhaps needlessly—remorseful.

‘My dear fellow,’ Dick said, laying his hand on the other’s shoulder as they went downstairs together, ‘you must not reproach yourself for an estrangement which, I feel sure, would have come to an end long ago if—if it had been practicable to represent matters in their true light. Very few people nowadays, I should think, would deny that your profession is an honourable one, and it is certain that nobody could refuse you credit for having made your living in your own way. Personally, if you’ll allow me to say so, I feel extremely proud of you.’

Anne was not so flattering. Anne, whom he met just before the dinner hour, and whose grizzled hair gave him a startling reminder of the passage of time, surveyed him with her head slightly inclined to one side, which was an old habit of hers, and

when he had gently said what was fitting and kindly, observed in her abrupt, dry way :

‘ You haven’t changed, Harold.’

Being unable to return the compliment, he kept silence, and the meal which followed was inevitably a silent one. The old woman who lay dead upstairs had been hard, autocratic, opinionated ; yet she had possessed qualities, such as a love of truth and justice, which are not very common with her sex and which had endeared her to her daughter, while her elder son, though a good deal afraid of her, had always held her in the highest esteem. The sight of her empty chair (for Anne would not seat herself at the head of the table) was saddening to them both, and Harold, taking his cue from them, spoke only at intervals, in a subdued tone of voice. Later in the evening, however—possibly in response to appealing glances from Dick—Anne made advances which were instantly and cordially met. She asked a few questions about the St. Martin’s Theatre ; she displayed a little of the interest which relationship demanded of her that she should feel in the lessee of that prosperous playhouse ; she even went so far as to say that she would rather like to see him in his professional capacity.

‘ My dear sister,’ returned Harold, ‘ it is as easy to do that as to take a return ticket to London, and I have a spare bedroom which is entirely at your service. You won’t witness a very high-class or improving spectacle ; but, on the other hand, you won’t be bored, for the piece we are doing just now has never bored anybody. I make that statement upon the authority of the Press.’

‘ I have no doubt I should be immensely amused,’ said Anne ; ‘ but I can’t accept your hospitality at present, thanks. We are old-fashioned people in these parts, as you may remember, and it wouldn’t do for me to be seen at a theatre this year. I must rest satisfied with admiring your talents off the stage.’

She added presently, after noting Harold’s look of pained surprise and interrogation : ‘ You will have opportunities of trotting them out, those talents of yours ; for the neighbourhood, I am afraid, doesn’t think too well of you. Oh, we’re an old-fashioned lot all of us, except the Gardiners. And the Gardiners are away from home.’

‘ I don’t know that I am consumed with anxiety to propitiate the neighbourhood,’ said Harold, smiling.

‘ No ? Well, I fancy that it might take you all your time to do it, if you were. Still, I don’t say that you would fail.’

'I shall be quite contented if I can propitiate my own people,' Harold declared.

'Meaning me? I am sure you don't mean Dick, who is already on all fours at your feet. But I need no propitiating: I have always recognised in you the most gifted member of the family. By the way, I hope you don't expect to inherit any part of my mother's small fortune. To avoid disappointment, I may as well tell you at once what I know for a fact, that you won't get a penny.'

Harold answered, quite truthfully, that he had had no expectations. Then he got up, walked across to the sofa upon which his sister was sitting, and gave her a little tap on the shoulder.

'Look here, Anne,' said he good-humouredly, 'this isn't quite fair. Of course I made a fool of myself once upon a time, and cost you all, I am afraid, money which you could ill afford to spare; but I think you will admit that I was punished, and perhaps you will also admit that, although I was extravagant, I was never greedy or avaricious. You hint—what is it that you hint? Upon my honour, I don't know; but I can tell you, likewise upon my honour, that I have no wish, nor any design, except to be friends with you both.'

It was impossible to hold out against an assurance so frankly straightforward. Anne smiled (and this time the corners of her mouth did not turn down), while she extended her hand to her younger brother. 'I apologise,' said she; 'I had no business to hint—indeed, I am not much given to hinting—but you must remember that I am a sour old maid, whereas you are a brilliant and attractive young celebrity. Naturally, I wanted to see how you would stand having nasty things said to you. You stand it very well, and we will certainly make friends, please.'

They did not exactly make friends; her attitude was rather too critical and observant for that, while his was perhaps a trifle over-conciliatory; but at least there were no verbal encounters between them during the next few days, and Dick had the comfort of believing, as well as hoping, that his mother's death had finally closed a breach which he had always deplored.

The very large attendance at the funeral bore testimony to the respect which had been entertained throughout the county for the deceased lady. Most of those who followed her remains to the grave had a kind word to say to the Rector after he had read the last sentences of the burial service; and one or two even went so far as to shake hands with his younger brother, although

the general feeling was that Harold had brought no credit upon the family. Amongst the few who thus recalled themselves to the memory of the now famous actor was Mr. Ormond of Beechwood Hall, a round-faced, ruddy old gentleman, ultra-Tory in his principles, bigoted, choleric, but warm-hearted, and (as he flattered himself) always ready to give the devil his due.

'This is a sad home-coming for you, my boy,' said he; 'and the saddest part of it is that you find your old home in strange occupancy. Well, there was no help for it, I suppose.'

'None whatever that I can see,' answered Harold, shaking his head sorrowfully.

'Ah, perhaps not—perhaps not. And you're prospering, I understand.'

'Oh, yes, I am prospering, thank you.'

'You are, eh? H'm—yours is a queer position for a Dunville and a brother of a parson to be in. Still, as somebody or other says, it takes all sorts of people to make a world, and bygones had better be bygones. For your father's and your mother's sake, not to mention your brother's and your own, we musn't show you the cold shoulder; so I hope, when you have leisure and inclination, you'll find your way over to Beechwood. Very glad to see you any day.'

Harold kept his countenance until he was out of the churchyard, and even then only laughed a little. Old Mr. Ormond's magnanimity and patronage were sufficiently comic; but to one of his temperament there was something very depressing in the discovery that at so short a distance from the metropolis his fame counted for absolutely nothing. In the eyes of these worthy people he was simply a rather disreputable person who had come to grief in early life and had then adopted a trade which had compelled his nearest relations to break off intercourse with him. Absurd and ignorant as such a view was, it hurt him; for what he valued far more than fame—more, indeed, than anything else in the world—was popularity.

(To be continued.)

At the Sign of the Ship.

WE scarcely know in this country how vigorously culture has taken hold of the American citizens. Nobody here thinks it necessary to write a panegyric on ignorance (like a recent American author), or to cry out in the streets that there are some things which some people need not know. We might as well, as an original thing to do, say that fine weather is very nice, or that Britons never will be slaves. These matters are taken for granted: a facetious rejoicing ignorance goes chuckling about, and it is an axiom, or postulate, or some such thing, of some reviewers that every book which demands a little preliminary knowledge in its readers is a book *ipso facto* condemned.

* * *

'What will the outsider think of this?' a critic asked, in speaking of a work by an intimate friend of my own. My friend did not care what 'the outsider' thought, because he did not write for 'the outsider.' He contemplated the possible existence of persons who are not 'outsiders': perhaps he was too sanguine. But, on this verge of the Atlantic, the ignoramus and the man in the street are so cockered up and pandered to that, if an author writes a book which is not meant for them, some critics appear to think that he is insulting the human race.

* * *

In America, Mr. Gerald Stanley Lee seems to find a very different posture of things. In his 'Lost Art of Reading' he sings the praises of a wholesome ignorance. That is quite superfluous here, and I am not fully convinced that it is absolutely necessary even in Massachusetts. 'They did not know everything down in Judee,' and it may be questioned whether they know everything, all of them, in Boston, Mass. Mr. Lee protests against 'The Bugbear of Being Well Informed.' But who is well

informed? I am the last man to claim to be well informed. I did not know where Somaliland is, nor where Niu Chwang is, nor what horse was favourite for the Derby, nor have I the slightest notion as to the nature and properties of ether; and if in physical science *j'aime les petits tourbillons*, it is only because a lady in Molière avowed the same preference. I know nothing about the Republic of Metz, or the Italian Republics, or the arguments in favour of Free Trade (when carried to an extreme), or about the constitution of the common pump, or spectrum analysis, or Bi-metallism, or the Education Bill. On the other hand, I know a few things that other people, as a rule, neither know nor care about. We live and let live, here; we do not attack each other with battering rams of information, even if we are tempted to tell a man who John Knox was, or to interpret to him the nature of *mercheta mulierum*. A man who talks to me about prosody is making a brutal assault on my carefully guarded innocence, and this kind of thing is not done in a constitutional country.

* * *

In the great American republic, Mr. Lee finds it necessary to form, in self-defence, the Ignoramus Club. 'Every member shall be pledged not to read the latest book until people have stopped expecting it.' One can abstain, here, from the latest book without joining a club, and most people do not even know that the book exists. Indeed, most persons avoid a book which they are expected to have read: I myself have not read the works of Mr. Benjamin Kidd, nor of 'Sporting Kid' either. The Club's committee is to report on 'New things that people do not need to know.' Thus it is new to me that the human appendix, according to Mr. Darwin, is all that is left of the tail of that pithecoïd ancestor, (about whom, also, I know nothing). A lady lately told me this fact about Mr. Darwin and the origin of the appendix. It was new to me, and I felt that I did not need to know it. The committee also reports on old things that people do not need to know. People do not know them: a whole family of my friends had never heard of Esther. It is a new thing that she was Ishtar, the Goddess of Love: new, but we need not know it, and for one I don't. Members of the Club are to be men (and, I hope, women) 'who have selected their ignorance thoughtfully, conscientiously, and for the protection of the mind.' In England we all have these qualifications, especially tutors and professors in our Universities; not so military men, whose minds are seldom securely

padded against general information. Any candidate for the Club is to be elected by acclamation who has not read *When Knighthood was in Flower*, *Audrey*, or *David Haram*. I ought to be admitted, for I never read the two latter books, and *Knighthood* only as far as was decent in a reviewer. What a book it was! *John Inglesant* was a pearl to *Knighthood*.

* * *

Among matters on which a judicious ignorance prevails in literary circles, at home and in America, may perhaps be reckoned the Latin language. An enterprising British purveyor of American literary ware lately asked me to accept a copy, in I know not how many volumes, of an American dictionary, and to write an opinion as to its merits. Naturally, I did not want a dictionary; the Oxford Dictionary is good enough, who lives to see it finished. So I asked that one volume, to be returned, might be sent as a specimen. Therein I found the *Gens Fulvius* mentioned, as who should write *bonus Musa*. This was a queer sample of judicious ignorance, and there were others. At home one sees, in a new book of biography, mention of a Renaissance work *De liberis educando*, which can hardly be right; and a critic in the *Saturday Review* has declared the words (which occur, for instance, on posy rings), *Tibi Soli*, to be untranslatable in his opinion. Heaven knows there is no reason to found a Society for the Propagation of Ignorance. Nobody need know Latin; but, when any lexicographer, historian, or critic does not, he had better leave Latin out of his dictionary, history, or reviews. But the ignorant workers in literature will drag Latin in, with an elegant plenty of false concords, and their editors seem to be as learned as themselves.

* * *

Among the essays of the Ignoramus Club is 'How to humble him who asks have you read——' The world humbles him, the world has not read—anything; and, as age advances, the greatest sinner ceases to ask 'Have you read Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy*?' or the like.

* * *

'Your hostess,' in an American drawing-room, 'introduces you to a man, who belongs to a Browning Club, too,' she says. But who belongs to a Browning Club? If a man knows anything about Keats in America, it means that he teaches English in a high school. We never meet men who let out that they know any-

thing about Keats, in private life. We seem to have an existence more free and happy than is attainable in Boston or other American cities, according to Mr. Lee. I must confess that his book, being very long (440 pages of close type), and full of matter which I do not seem to care about or understand, is among the first which the Ignoramus Club may safely eliminate from its shelves. Besides, who does read books in a Club, or even cut the pages of the new books which come duly from Mr. Mudie's, and thither return?

* * *

One must not insult and irritate the reader by asking, 'Have you read Mr. Mackail's translation of the *Odyssey*?'¹ It has been my business to read many translations of the *Odyssey*, Chapman's, Pope's, Fenton's, and Broome's, Mr. William Morris's, Mr. Worsley's, and so on. But I must say that Mr. Mackail's is the only version which gives me, in some considerable measure, the same sort of pleasure as one gets from the original Greek. In the first place, it is extremely literal, without modern ornament. In the next place, it is charmingly musical, in quite a new way; for who could have guessed that the quatrains of Fitzgerald's *Omar* might become the vehicle of narrative? A brick out of the house as a specimen was exhibited by the Greek Gothamite in Hierocles. Here is a brick selected where the page opened, the coming of *Hermes* to *Calypso's* isle:

As a sea-eagle that his finny prey
Chases, his thickset plumage wet with spray,
Through the dread gulfs of sea unharvested,
Over the thronging waves he sped his way.

And now that island far amid the foam
Reaching, from out the violet sea he clomb
Over the mainland, to the cavern great
Wherein the fair-tressed nymph had made her home.

Within he found her in the cavern-cell;
Where from a brazier by her, burning well,
A fire of cloven cedar-wood and pine
Far through the island sent a goodly smell.

And in it she with voice melodious sang,
While through the warp her golden shuttle rang
As to and fro before the loom she went.
But round the cave a verdurous forest sprang

¹ Books 1-8. John Murray.

Of poplars, and sweet-scented cypresses,
 And alders; and long-pinioned birds in these
 Nested, owls, falcons, chattering cormorants,
 And all that ply their business in the seas.

In prose one can give the story without the song: it appears to me that Mr. Mackail gives both the song and the story. Let us take a highly technical passage, the building of the raft by Odysseus:

A score of logs he cut and hewed them square
 With the bronze axe, and trimmed them all with care
 By line and level, and then drilled them through
 With augers, that Calypso, Goddess fair,

Next brought to help him; and these fitting in,
 Bolted them tight with dowel and with pin;
 And as the bottom of a merchant ship
 To lay a skilful shipwright would begin,

So wide abeam his raft Odysseus made:
 And upon upright spars close-set he laid
 A spar-deck finished with long gunwale-strips,
 And to the raft a mast and yard he stayed:

And made and fixed an oar to steer aright;
 And then with osier hurdles woven tight
 Fenced the raft round, and laid much wood on it,
 To break the waves: and next the Goddess bright,

Calypso, brought him cloth for sails to be.
 Those in like manner deftly fashioned he,
 With brace and sheet and halyard; and drew down
 The raft on rollers to the shining sea.

All this, though, I believe, meticulously accurate, is *coulant*, natural, pleasant in the reading; very seldom indeed is there a hampering archaism of phrase, so that, on the whole, here at last is the *Odyssey* for English readers. As far as I see, it might almost safely be used as a crib by idle schoolboys, and yet it is as spontaneous and poetical as if the author were going an easy way, without an intent eye on the Greek original. *Enfin*, I am unacquainted with any translation so adequate and exquisite as are these first eight books of the greatest of romances.

* * *

One may wish success to 'The Book Shops, Limited.' The prospectus avers that in a Yorkshire urban area of 167,000 inhabitants 'there is only one small bookshop.' 'There are very

few instances of bookshops in towns with a population of less than 25,000.' Oh, Education Bill! After all the fury expended in teaching children to read, they clearly do not read books. The prospectus goes on to say terrible things about the knowledge and energy of booksellers, 'according to the evidence on the subject submitted to a recent committee of specialists.' Can it be possible that 'they are usually unaware of the new books already issued or about to be issued'? Do they not read the periodicals which abound in puffs preliminary of Miss Hodge's and Mr. Jones's new novels, with photographs of these hitherto inconspicuous authors? Mr. Nutt is quoted as saying that 'there is no machinery at all whereby books of an abstruse, scholarly, or recondite character can, by means of the English book trade, be brought to the notice of those interested.' But surely the little flock of those interested can read the *Athenæum* for themselves, or the advertisements of books in the newspapers. If they do not, they cannot be 'interested' much: let them perish in their sins. It seems to me that, even though I lived in Yorkshire, I should find out when there arose a new book on any of my fads or hobbies, which are recondite, and that I would acquire that book, if its price was within my limited means. Mr. Bernard Shaw avers that in St. Pancras 'sextants are on sale and books are not.' Probably the population of St. Pancras wants sextants, but does not want books. Mr. Shaw 'has never seen a book of his in a shop yet'; but I have, I think, often been more successful in seeing a book by Mr. Shaw in a bookshop. Mr. Wells can nowhere find 'a pleasant edition of an English version of the *Utopia*,' though he supposes that 'at least three publishers in London are trying to sell me what I want to buy.' Except Mr. Arber's cheap edition of the *Utopia* I remember none recently published; but if there are three at least, any bookseller should know. It is an age of pretty reprints, as in the Temple series of books. There must surely be a pleasant edition of the *Utopia*. Where there is an absence of supply it usually means an absence of demand. If the public really wanted books, as it really wants tobacco, there would be plenty of good bookshops. The new company can put the water before the horse, and spread the net in the sight of the bird. But the horse is not thirsty, and the bird is very wide awake and philosophical. He pecks at the circulating libraries and when he cannot get what he wants he takes something else. A despairing lady writes to me that she has sent thirteen times for a new book to her circulating library, and

written to its headquarters, but in vain. As to *buying* the book, so wild an idea has never occurred to her essentially English mind. In this state of affairs one looks with but 'a doubtful trust' to the success of The Book Shops, Limited.

• • •

We are, it seems, condemned to witness a resurrection of 'the Carlyle controversy,' about the rights and wrongs of the little tiffs between two neurotic persons of genius. A great deal of scientific information about the mental and bodily condition of Mr. Carlyle is offered by Sir James Crichton-Browne. Clearly neither of the distinguished mates could take the excellent advice, 'Be aisy, or, if you can't be aisy, be as aisy as you can.' Mr. W. S. Lilly cannot be aisy, but in the *Fortnightly Review* for June carries the war, of all places, into Balliol, thus: 'And the late Master of Balliol set his seal to the verdict. "All London," he wrote to Lady Abercromby, in March 1881, "is talking about the *Reminiscences* with well-deserved reprobation. . . . It contains, however, a true picture of the man himself. . . . While talking about shams, he was himself the greatest of shams."' Mr. Lilly comments on this:

'Jowett—delineated with photographic accuracy in one of Carlyle's pen-and-ink sketches, as "a poor little good-humoured owlet of a body, Oxford Liberal, and very conscious of being so: not knowing right hand from left otherwise"—had a grudge of his own to pay off against the dead man. So had the British public. The biting phrase, "twenty-seven millions, mostly fools," was by no means forgotten. Many long ears were still tingling with it.' I do not know how intimate Mr. Lilly may have been with the late Master of Balliol, but to myself, who knew him for many years, Mr. Carlyle's verbal photograph does not appear accurate. The Master was difficult to paint, and difficult to photograph. I first saw him when I was a boy, with his foot on my native heather, on the Table of Lorne, and then he was very like Mr. Richmond's portrait of him, his expression being singularly winning. Later, his face became rounder and more 'cherubic.' Cherubs are rather like owlets, and I daresay that Mr. Carlyle called Mr. Jowett 'a poor little good-humoured *hoolet* of a body,' and so forth. It is not a witty or accurate description, but Mr. Carlyle always tried to say something amusingly deprecatory about almost everybody. So did Mrs. Carlyle. 'My private opinion of Browning is . . . that he is "nothing," or very little more, "but a fluff of feathers."'

Amiable and clear-sighted lady! Her fluff of feathers may pair off with Mr. Carlyle's good-humoured hoolet. Anybody, with a good deal of spite and a little fancy, may produce verbal photographs of that kind without limit. The pity is that they should be printed.

* * *

I do not know if Mr. Carlyle ever said anything about Mr. Lilly. A pleasing 'pencil game' for a wet day would be for each player to set down what Mr. Carlyle might have said, in his friendly, facetious manner, about Mr. Lilly or about anyone else. Ideas of an appropriate kind flock into the imagination. Examples I decline to offer; Mr. Carlyle usually selected his comparisons from the animal creation, like the misshapen fellow-slave of Rhodope. Whether Mr. Jowett ever heard of the withering sarcasm about the hoolet, and wished to revenge it, I do not know; Sir Crichton-Browne devotes eight mortal pages to demolishing the Master of Balliol! When he called Mr. Carlyle 'the greatest of shams' I presume him to have meant that Mr. Carlyle's conduct, like that of most preachers, was at variance with his sermons.

All this I had written before the appearance of *My Relations with Carlyle*, a note on these, written by Mr. Froude in Cuba, March 12-15, 1887.¹ On several points in this work, it is not necessary or desirable to enter in this place. But the main point is that Mr. Froude, as every unbiassed person who has read his writings on Mr. Carlyle must be aware, was actuated throughout by nothing but loyalty to his friend, and an anxious desire at once to fulfil his wishes, and to avoid speaking of certain things better left unspoken. Mr. Froude shows in this fragment, as he had shown before, how difficult it was to ascertain exactly what Mr. Carlyle desired to be done. In his melancholy old age he gave and withdrew papers; but, three months before his death, 'I told him that the *Letters* should be published, and the *Memoir*' (of Mrs. Carlyle) 'also. He seemed at once relieved and easy. He said I must do as I pleased. He never gave me any order. Then and always he avoided giving any order. He threw the responsibility on me.' It was almost a hideous responsibility. Mr. Carlyle and Mr. Froude had the idea that biography should not leave its subject 'in the white beatified ghost-condition.' These are Mr. Carlyle's words in his review of

¹ Longmans, 1903

Lockhart's *Scott*. Mr. Carlyle then attacks the idiotic contemporary theory 'that Mr. Lockhart has at heart a dislike to Scott, and has done his best in an underhand treacherous manner to dishero him.'

* . *

Mr. Froude knew that he, like Lockhart, would be accused of degrading the memory of his Headmaster and friend. He had more to fear, because Carlyle was not the same kind of man as Sir Walter.

Whatever record leap to light,
He never can be shamed.

In these circumstances of extraordinary delicacy, and obedient to Mr. Carlyle's wishes as expressed to him, Mr. Froude gave his friend to the world in no 'white beatified ghost-condition.' Carlyle had obvious faults, as, in another kind, had Scott and Dr. Johnson. Lockhart, Boswell, and Mr. Froude did not conceal the faults, and all three were bitterly blamed. Mr. Lilly has even drawn a trenchant historical parallel between Mr. Froude and Judas Iscariot. I can only say that, in Mr. Froude's *Thomas Carlyle*, I think we see the man as he was, with his defects and with his qualities; a man of genius, a man by nature unhappy, by nature affectionate, benevolent, vehement, self-absorbed; in fact, not at all the stoic of his own philosophy. He was a thorough Scot, so was his wife; it is easy to understand the pair, who, I honestly believe, were true lovers, despite all their differences, to the end. This is the idea which I gather of them from Mr. Froude's works of 1881-1884.

* . *

Then he was accused of bitterness against Carlyle, of saying, in malice, what ought to be left unsaid; though what should, and what should not, be said, in the unparalleled circumstances, no man can justly decide. His honesty and veracity were assailed in language of a sort now rare in any kind of controversy. But Sir James Stephen, Mr. Froude's co-executor, who knew the intricacies of the perplexed affair, wrote: 'You appear to me throughout to have acted quite straightforwardly. You carried out precisely what from the first you acknowledged to be your moral obligations. . . . In a word, in your whole conduct I see nothing to regret.' To end with Mr. Froude's own words, 'It is likely enough that I have made mistakes in matters of fact as well as in the reading of the manuscripts' (which needed the

use of a microscope). 'Let all such be made known. No one will be better pleased than I shall be. I complain only of reflections on my good faith and personal honesty, which I fling off me with legitimate indignation.' He had a right to fling them off.

* * *

As for Sir James Crichton-Browne, had he left owlets and Mr. Jowett alone, and verified his references, and added certain facts which he omits in his attack on Mr. Froude, and corrected his quotations into accuracy, he would be a more scientific critic. For a misquotation that entirely alters the sense, see Sir James's, p. xii., in his Introduction to *New Letters, &c.*, the last line of the page, and compare the last line of vol. ii., p. 410, of Mr. Froude's *Thomas Carlyle: A History of his Life in London*. 1884.

* * *

We have a new and fascinating historical Sherlock Holmes in Mr. John Pollock, author of *The Popish Plot* (Duckworth). Not for long have I read such an absorbing book. Here is an historian who is learned in his theme, but who is at the opposite pole from dulness. No detective novel can hurry you on with curiosity more breathless than Mr. Pollock in his study of that insane crisis of England, the alleged Popish Plot. There was, of course, always a Popish Plot; there always had been since Elizabeth began to persecute her loyal Catholic subjects. What the actual state of the futile intrigues was, Mr. Pollock shows. Technically speaking, as the law stood, Coleman was guilty of high treason. But the monstrous figments of Oates, Bedloe & Co. were as absurd as the frenzy of the terror of the huge Protestant majority was ludicrous and unmanly. The state of the criminal law, with its clotted injustices, is lucidly exposed, and Scroggs is, to a fair extent, whitewashed. He was not such a bad fellow, Scroggs; and the fault of juries and judges was mainly belief in conspicuous nonsense. Almost the only man who kept his head was the King, which, in a moral sense, was not much to his Majesty's credit.

* * *

The centre of the mystery is, of course, the disappearance and murder of the worthy beak, Sir Edmund Berry Godfrey. Here, indeed, is a puzzle for Sherlock Holmes. A fortnight after taking Oates's deposition, the magistrate leaves his home at about 9 A.M.,

is seen at one o'clock near Charing Cross, and never again till, five days later, he is found dead in a dry, bramble-covered ditch near Primrose Hill, his own sword through his heart, his neck said to be broken, and his breast badly bruised. Who killed Sir Edmund, where, when, why? Nobody has ever known. The three men who were hanged for the crime were innocent. That is the mystery; and Mr. Pollock has his theory, with which, so far, I cannot agree, but I have no counter theory. In one way it was the interest of Catholics that Godfrey should die; in another way it was the interest of the perjured accusers of the Catholics. But it was certainly not in the interest of the Catholics that Godfrey's body should ever be found, yet distinct steps were taken to make the discovery inevitable. If Catholics killed the magistrate, they had ample time and opportunity to get rid of the body in dozens of ways, instead of placing it in such a manner that it must be found. However, people do not always understand their own interests. In brief, nothing can be more pleasingly perplexing. The detectives of the period were no Sherlocks; Mr. Holmes would have run the guilty to earth in twenty-four hours. Meanwhile the modern reader may expend his ingenuity, Mr. Pollock having furnished most of the available materials. On the whole, we seem at last to have a thoroughly readable as well as thoroughly conscientious historian. To combine these qualities is at least as difficult as to write plays acceptable to gallery, stalls, and cultivated critics.

ANDREW LANG.

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